DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 182 342 TM 010 093

AUTHOR Nochumson, Bayla S.
TITLE Resources for Schools: 7. Competency Programs for Basic Skills Improvement: A Resource Guide.
INSTITUTION Massachusetts State Dept. of Education, Boston.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 78
GRANT NIE-G-76-0058
NOTE 87p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Annotated Bibliographies; Basic Skills; Educational Objectives; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduation Requirements; Human Resources; Information Dissemination; *Minimum Competency Testing; Program Descriptions; Resource Guides; *School Districts; *State Programs; *State Standards; *Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

This resource guide is divided into three sections. The status of the competency movement is described in section I, both on the national level and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Descriptions of locally developed competency programs in Massachusetts are given in section II and contain information on the area's demography, per-pupil-expenditures, contact persons, and a brief overview of the status of the programs. A list of resources available to competency program planners is compiled in section III and includes the State Board of Education's "Policy on Basic Skills Improvement;" an annotated bibliography; a descriptive listing of some available competency tests and test building services; a list of members of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements; and the Competency/Assessment Linkers of the State Department of Education. (MH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED182342

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

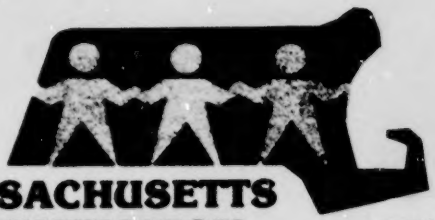
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

7. COMPETENCY PROGRAMS FOR BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT: A RESOURCE GUIDE

TM010 093



MASSACHUSETTS DISSEMINATION PROJECT

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. DiBella
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

SUMMER 1978

BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHARLES T. GRIGSBY, CHAIRPERSON
ANNE H. McHUGH, VICE CHAIRPERSON

JAMES AZZARITO
MARY BARROS
JOHN BOND
JAMES L. GREEN
HOWARD A. GREIS
MARY ANN HARDENBERGH
JULIAN HOUSTON
JOSEPH C. MELLO
EDWARD E. PHILLIPS
EDWIN ROSSMAN

GREGORY R. ANRIG, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, SECRETARY

EX OFFICIO MEMBER:
LEROY KEITH, JR., CHANCELLOR, BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

THIS PUBLICATION WAS DEVELOPED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF:

THE BUREAU OF RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

ALLAN S. HARTMAN
LESLIE S. MAY
LYNN WOLFSFELD

The Massachusetts Department of Education insures equal employment/educational opportunities/ affirmative action, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, or sex, in compliance with Title IX, or handicap, in compliance with Section 504.

PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT APPROVED BY ALFRED C. HOLLAND, STATE PURCHASING AGENT.

RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

7. COMPETENCY PROGRAMS FOR BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT: A RESOURCE GUIDE

BY

BAYLA S. NOCHUMSON

MASSACHUSETTS DISSEMINATION PROJECT STAFF

CECILIA M. DI BELLA, DIRECTOR AND EDITOR

ELIZABETH J. MAILLETT

RUTH SANTER

ANN STUTZ VAN WINKLE

This publication was made possible by a grant from the National Institute of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare (NIE-G-76-0058). However, the opinions expressed or materials included do not necessarily reflect NIE policy and no official endorsement by the National Institute of Education should be inferred.

PREFACE

Resources for Schools is a series of publications developed by the Massachusetts Dissemination Project (MDP) for Massachusetts educators, parents, and students. The project, funded by the National Institute of Education, has four major goals:

- to stimulate greater awareness of the resources available to Massachusetts schools,
- to provide educators, parents and students with specific information about resources and materials for school programs and services,
- to assist regional education centers and the Department to increase and improve information and dissemination services to educators, parents, and students in the state,
- to encourage greater exchange and sharing of resources among educational organizations, service providers, the Department of Education and its regional education centers, and school personnel.

The project is located in the Department's Boston office. In addition, each regional center has designated a staff member who maintains continuous contact and involvement with project activities across the state, and is responsible for working with center staff to improve information and dissemination services in the center. Ultimately, the regional centers will function as switchboards -- sometimes providing services directly to schools, other times connecting them with the many existing resources. The development of this series -- as its name suggests -- is one way the project is helping make these connections. *Please contact a member of the project staff for more information about the series, the project or the regional center nearest you.*

Resources for Schools presently available:

1. A Catalog of Publications from the Massachusetts Department of Education.
2. Video Tapes for Teaching.
3. A Guide to Dissemination Agencies.
4. Community Involvement in Your School: A Guide to People, Programs and Publications.
5. The Student's Guide to Special Education.
6. Implementing Chapter 622: Exemplary Programs for Alleviating Racism and Sexism in Massachusetts Schools.

Resources for Schools topics to look for in the future:

- Special Education Teacher Training Resources.
- Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- Examining Massachusetts Student Assessment Data: Resources and Curriculum.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I. STATUS OF THE COMPETENCY MOVEMENT - NATIONALLY AND IN MASSACHUSETTS 5

II. MASSACHUSETTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

Competency Programs in Selected Local School Districts..... 10

Summary Chart of Local School District Assessment Activities..... 38

Local School Districts in Preliminary Stages of Program Development..... 42

III. RESOURCES

Board of Education Policy on Basic Skills Improvement..... 46

Annotated Bibliography..... 63

Selected Competency Tests and Services..... 71

Massachusetts Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements..... 74

Competency/Assessment Linkers of the Massachusetts Department of Education..... 78

Map..... 80

INTRODUCTION

During the past three years there has been considerable discussion and activity at the local, state, and national levels about the establishment of competency standards. Competency standards programs are defined and referred to differently by various states and local school districts. However, the concept of students graduating from high school with the basic skills needed to function as effective adults, remains a constant thread. The competency standards program in the city of Quincy for example, is designed to provide students with "those demonstrated skills and acquired knowledge which enable the individual to function in society effectively, independently and with potential for growth."

The interest in competency standards is a result of several convergent issues and concerns that have affected educational policy in recent years. These factors include: declining student performance on standardized achievement tests; questions about the meaning and value of the high school diploma; a feeling that a number of students leave school lacking skills needed to function effectively in today's complex society; and pressure for schools to be held "accountable" for the results produced by the heavy public investment in education. At present, all fifty states and numerous local school districts have implemented or are planning to implement some form of competency standards programs. According to the Education Commission of the States, "no concept in recent years has received such widespread attention, either legislatively or by state board adoption."

The competency standards programs at the state and local levels have varying purposes. These include: monitoring the basic skills development of students, evaluating and improving school effectiveness, certifying students for high school graduation, and deciding whether students should be promoted from one grade to another. While there is much variation among

states and local districts about the use, scope and content of their competency standards programs, states share a common commitment to insuring that all students have achieved a specified level of skills by the time they graduate or leave the public schools.

In developing competency standards programs, states and local districts have been confronted with a number of complex and controversial issues and questions concerning the implications of their programs. These issues and questions encompass a number of educational, technical, political, economic and legal concerns. Among them are:

- How should competency standards be defined? Who should determine these standards?
- How are competencies to be measured?
- What are the criteria that will be used for determining whether students have mastered the specified competency levels?
- What can be done to assist students who have difficulty achieving required competencies?
- How expensive is it to establish and to implement a competency standards program?
- Will the establishment of competency standards and the subsequent assessment of students foster improved teaching and result in increased learning?
- Would a competency-based graduation requirement penalize and stigmatize students or would it lead to students graduating from high school with increased competency levels?

This publication was developed to provide school administrators, curriculum designers, school committee members, parents, and members of the general community with pertinent information and guidance as they consider competency programs in their districts. In June 1978 the Board of Education approved the state's course of action for the future of competency standards programs in Massachusetts. Either in anticipation of the Board's decision, or quite apart from it, twenty-one Massachusetts school districts have already developed competency programs geared for kindergarten to twelfth grade

students. Furthermore, eighteen other districts are in the preliminary stages of developing competency programs. These activities form a solid base of information for other Massachusetts schools. Overall, school district information and the national and state resources described in this resource book are designed to provide access to individuals, organizations, and programs that are already involved in the creative process of developing competency programs.

Competency Programs For Basic Skills Improvement: A Resource Guide is divided into three sections. Section I reviews the status of the competency movement both nationally and in Massachusetts. Section II includes in-depth descriptions of locally-developed competency programs in Massachusetts. While the school districts included here may not be an exhaustive listing of all activity in the Commonwealth, they do describe programs in most of the cities and towns that have developed a written policy on competencies in basic skills for their students.

Socio-economic and demographic information about each district was taken from the most recent data collected by the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDE). The "all programs" figure in Per Pupil Expenditure 1976-1977* was the source for each school system's per pupil expenditure. Information about the "kind of community" was taken from 1974 MDE data which consolidated a fourteen group classification, developed by the Massachusetts Department of Administration and Finance, into four groups: big cities, industrial suburbs, residential suburbs, and small towns and other communities. The student population figure was taken from data collected yearly by the Massachusetts Department of Education and published in the Massachusetts School Directory 1976-1977.*

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of cities and towns whose projects are currently in preliminary stages, and as such, could not be

*Published annually and available in limited quantities from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Educational Information Services, 31 St. James Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

summarized for this edition. The names of these districts, as well as contact people, follow the descriptions of competency programs in local school districts, in Section II.

The final section, Section III, is a compilation of resources available to competency program planners. This section includes: 1) the State Board of Education's Policy on Basic Skills Improvement; 2) an annotated bibliography of a) general information on the competency movement and b) information on the issue of competency testing; 3) a descriptive listing of several available competency tests and test building services with information about approximate costs and persons to contact; 4) a list of the members of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements; and 5) the Competency/Assessment Linkers of the Department of Education, all of whom may be contacted for information and assistance.

Special thanks go to Allan S. Hartman, Leslie S. May, Lynn Wolfsfeld, and Helen Lau of the Department's Research and Assessment Bureau for providing us with materials, advice, and considerable time and attention. Without them, this resource book would not have been possible. Thanks go also to Richard A. Gilman, Director of the Bureau of Educational Information Services, for his editorial assistance. Finally, my personal thanks to the Dissemination Project Staff: Elizabeth Maillett, Ann Stutz Van Winkle, and Ruth Santer, for their assistance, and to Cecilia DiBella for her continuing advice and support.

Bayla S. Nochumson
Summer 1978

SECTION I

STATUS OF THE COMPETENCY MOVEMENT - NATIONALLY AND IN MASSACHUSETTS

Nationally

Since 1972, when the Oregon Board of Education adopted competency-based graduation requirements, more than 31 states have adopted competency standards policies as the result of either legislative or State Board of Education action. A brief overview of some of the more well known programs will demonstrate the diverse nature of the various approaches to competency programs.

The California Hart Law, passed in 1976 requires local school districts to set graduation standards in reading, writing and computation. The State Board of Education is required to provide technical assistance to local districts in their efforts to implement the law which will affect the graduating class of 1981.

Beginning with the graduating class of 1978, the New York Board of Regents requires that all students pass a state-developed competency test in reading and mathematics as a prerequisite for high school graduation. However, this policy is presently being reconsidered by the Board of Regents. An attempt is being made to substitute a more difficult examination than the present one, to determine graduation eligibility.

In Pennsylvania, the Board of Education has undertaken a five-year study known as Project 81. Twelve districts have been selected as field sites to pilot various aspects of competency programs. After five years a decision will be made as to state policy on competency standards. Other states which have programs well past the developmental stages include Florida, Georgia, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, Vermont and Virginia.

At the federal level, the National Institute of Education (NIE), in collaboration with Educational Commission of the States, sponsored four regional conferences on minimal competency testing. In addition, a new Office of Testing and Assessment has been established within NIE. One of its primary functions will be to provide technical assistance to states which are implementing competency testing programs.

Also at the federal level, several congressional bills have been filed which deal with the issue of competency standards. The most notable bill was filed by Representative Mottl of Ohio and would require the establishment of national minimum competency standards. Finally, a House bill is under consideration which would provide federal funding to those states in the process of implementing competency programs.

In Massachusetts

In June 1977, the State Board of Education formally appointed a 35-member Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements. The committee's charge was to recommend to the Board of Education procedures and policies for implementing essential competency standards programs. The final report to the Board of Education was submitted in June 1978 and is included in the Board's policy statement in the Resources section of this publication.

In addition to State Board of Education activities, various educational organizations have established task forces to study the issue of competency standards. Most of these task forces submitted position papers on the Proposed Essential Competency Standards Program to the State Board of Education. Among the organizations which established task forces are the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association, the Massachusetts Junior High/Middle School Principals Association,

the Massachusetts Parent/Teacher/Student Association, the Massachusetts Secondary School Principals Association, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

A further indicator of interest in the competency issue can be found in the activities of the Massachusetts legislature. Several bills have been filed which are concerned with this issue. Hearings were held in April 1978. To check the status of the bills or to find out if new bills have been filed, contact Sue Cooper, Joint Committee on Education, State House, Boston, Massachusetts 02133, (617) 727-2584.

Finally, several statewide conferences on competency testing were held in the spring of 1978. The Cambridge Public Schools in collaboration with the Bureau of Research and Assessment, Massachusetts Department of Education sponsored the Urban Conference on Competency-Based Education. A publication entitled "Competency Standards and Urban School Districts -- A Report and Recommendations" is available from the Bureau of Research and Assessment. In May, the New England School Development Council in collaboration with Fitchburg Public Schools' Project Competency sponsored Here Comes Competency Testing! Are You Ready?. Proceedings will be available in the fall of 1978 from the New England School Development Council, 85 Speen Street, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701, (617) 879-7624.

The Massachusetts Department of Education has designated certain staff members in the regional centers who are available to answer questions about, and provide assistance with, essential competency standards programs. Their names and addresses are listed in the Resource section of this publication.

SECTION II

MASSACHUSETTS LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

ACTON/BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONTACT PERSON:

Gary G. Baker
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
16 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720 (617) 263-9503

* Kind of Community: residential subu
Student Population: 2510
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,798

In the 1974-75 school year, a committee of administrators, counselors, and teachers was formed to investigate uses and misuses of standardized tests. After discussion - including the possibility of eliminating standardized testing - the committee recommended that the norm-referenced Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills be used while plans are being made to increase the use of criterion-referenced tests.

Since then, measurable instructional objectives have been developed in every subject area for grades K-12, and criterion-referenced tests have been, or will be, developed to test these objectives. Criterion-referenced tests have been administered in junior high mathematics and high school English, and are being developed in other academic areas as well. The Educational Records Bureau's independent school normed Comprehensive Testing Program has been used with honors students. The Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) test in writing is used for all sophomores in addition to a criterion-referenced test in writing.

Future plans include completing all instructional objectives by 1978, with a time schedule for developing appropriate criterion-referenced tests in each area. It is planned that norm-referenced testing will be stressed less as criterion-referenced tests are used more extensively.

A Citizen's Advisory Committee on competency-based education was formed during the 1977-78 school year to develop a list of minimal competencies for Acton-Boxborough high school graduates. Target completion of this list is spring, 1978. This committee also plans to submit a position paper on competency-based education to the State Board of Education.

* This refers to the city or town where the school is located and may not accurately describe the other cities or towns who are members of the regional district.

AGAWAM

CONTACT PERSON:

Ernest J. Cannava
Superintendent of Schools
1305 Springfield Street
Feeding Hills, MA 01030
(413) 786-5414

Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 5464
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,152

In the spring of 1976, the superintendent of schools established a committee to identify an appropriate test instrument to measure and certify that a student graduating from Agawam High School possessed the "necessary" competencies in the areas of mathematics, reading, and language arts. Research was conducted to determine similar efforts in other school districts in the United States. Following this investigation, goals were formulated for developing and recommending assessment instruments. A flow chart was constructed as a model for Agawam's Competency Test Program.

The Stanford Achievement Test was chosen as the competency test for a number of reasons: 1) the test is closely aligned with stated educational objectives, 2) a data bank, with information from the Stanford Achievement Test already exists for students presently in grades 2-6*, 3) test results identify individual needs of each student in the appropriate skill area, and 4) local student norms can also be compared to national norms developed by the Stanford Testing Bureau.

The purpose of the three phase testing program adopted by Agawam is to develop curricula and courses that will meet the individual needs of all students. Phase I of the Competency Test Program began in the spring of 1977 with the administration of the test to all 11th grade students. Test data were used to develop local norms and to establish a competency level appro-

---

* By June 1978, the data bank will include all grade levels. Thus, it is possible to maintain longitudinal studies of each student in grades 2-12.

priate for Agawam students. Following analysis of the 11th graders test results, the administration will recommend a level of competency for reading, language arts, and mathematics.

In the fall of 1977, grades 9, 10, and 11 were tested. These results, along with data already available from lower grades, provide a cross-validation study, enabling Agawam to determine the validity of their levels of competency.

During Phase II, 1977-78, instruments to measure student competency in civics, citizenship education, practical science, and health are being developed. Phase III, to begin in the 1978-1979 school year, will include development of specific competency requirements necessary for graduation from Agawam High School.

ANDOVER

CONTACT PERSON:

Philip Wormwood, Principal
Andover High School
Shawsheen Road
Andover, MA 01810
(617) 475-8440

Kind of Community: residential suburb
Student Population: 6381
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,552

During the 1976-77 school year, Andover drafted a proposal to examine the issue of basic or baseline graduation requirements. A pilot test instrument was developed by Andover school personnel to test students' skills in English, mathematics, social studies, and guidance. The instrument is intended as a managerial aid to help administrators determine student capabilities in citizenship, employment, and consumerism and is not a substitute for high school graduation requirements.

The pilot test instrument was developed in the fall of 1977. Guidelines for the administration of the test state that:

(1) the passing grade should be set within the 80-90 percent range

(2) multiple forms of the tests should be developed

(3) tests should be administered early in the junior year to allow students time to select and take appropriate remedial courses

(4) an explanatory brochure, outlining the purpose and scope of the test should be developed and widely distributed

In February 1978, all ninth grade students were tested in communication and computation skills. Currently, all incoming tenth graders are given the Shaw and Berhl mathematics test and the Stanford Achievement Test in English. Tenth and eleventh grade students are given the School and College Ability Test (SCAT), part of the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP).

Full implementation of the Andover program has been postponed pending the decision of the Massachusetts Department of Education on competency standards.

ATTLEBORO

CONTACT PEOPLE:

Theodore Thibodeau
Curriculum Coordinator (K-8)
Attleboro High School
Rathbun-Willard Drive
Attleboro, MA 02703
(617) 222-5150

Robert Haggerty
Coordinator of Occupational and Academic Education
Attleboro High School
Attleboro, MA 02703
(617) 222-5150

Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 7966
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,5

Attleboro is in the preliminary stage of preparation for its competency program. Administrators, department heads, and coordinators are involved in developing components such as a management system in reading, spelling and mathematics at the elementary level; a K-8 basic skills testing program; an objectives-based curriculum at the middle school level; terminal objectives for all academic high school courses, and a K-12 writing sample procedure using a criterion rating scale. An Occupational Competencies Program has been developed which requires progress reports that list skills in which each student must demonstrate competency. Categories of competency are termed "minimum", "adequate", or "proficient". Entrance and exit criteria have also been established for special needs classes. Terminal objectives have been developed for high school English, mathematics, science, social studies, music, visual arts, and home economics. These objectives became effective in March 1978.

Present testing includes: the Metropolitan Test for Kindergarten, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills for grades 1-8, and a pilot test for grades 9-12 using the Senior High Assessment of Reading Progress (SHARP).

Materials of interest developed by Attleboro include the following: a "Management System Checklist", an article entitled "Managing the Basics" that describes educational management systems and their application in the Attleboro public schools, and guidelines for writing criterion-referenced tests.

BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONTACT PERSON:

Joseph L. Wood
Superintendent of Schools
Main Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-3711

* Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 2321
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,756

During the summer of 1974, department supervisors of English, mathematics, science, social studies, and career education, and the high school principal met to review and revitalize Monument Mountain Regional High School's graduation requirements. As a result of their efforts, graduation requirements are now determined in three phases: Basic Skills (Phase I), Maturation and Awareness Experiences (Phase II), and Career Oriented Skills (Phase III). All skills and experiences are based on criteria for survival in society. The Berkshire Hills group maintains that this program represents the minimum education a high school should provide for its students and that individual needs and potentials must be stressed with accompanying course work and individual attention. To this end, all students are expected each year to take courses in addition to the minimum requirements. Although development of Phase III has been temporarily postponed, implementation of Phases I and II applies to the class of 1981.

A student handbook was developed that contains information on required courses listed by grade. Students in grades 9 and 10 are required to take specific English, mathematics, science, and physical education courses. In the 11th and 12th grades, students are required to take a number of electives in defined areas, such as social studies and English literature.

Basic Skills, (Phase I), are clearly defined in the areas of English (including writing, language skills, listening, and reading newspapers);

* This refers to the city or town where the school is located and may not accurately describe the other cities and towns who are members of the regional district.

physical education (demonstrating physical and intellectual skills for "lifetime" activities and giving first aid); mathematics (skills in working with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percent, graphs, etc.); science (including using the scientific method, interpreting science news releases, distinguishing between fact and opinion); and social studies.

Maturation and Awareness Experiences (Phase II) include a variety of reading experiences; exposure to creative skills in writing, acting, and directing; understanding how science has affected history and society; applied mathematics; and materials which aid students in re-examining their values.

Evaluation rests with classroom paper and pencil exams created by teachers, in addition to projects, papers, and oral presentations. The results are used to diagnose learning problems.

If accepted for formal implementation by the school committee, completion of this program will be required for graduation for the class of 1982.

BOSTON

CONTACT PERSON:

William J. Reid, Headmaster
Boston School Department
26 Court Street
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 726-6536

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 84,639
Per Pupil Expenditure: $2,759

An ad hoc committee of teachers, parents, students, and administrators, and headed by the superintendent of schools, is currently developing Standards in Basic Skills for grades 1-12. Curricular areas being examined are reading, composition writing, spelling, grammar, and mathematics.

The committee has been divided into three smaller groups, each addressing one component of the total basic skills curriculum. In reading, a body of criterion-referenced tests has been introduced in all schools for grades 1-8. Similar assessment instruments for grades 9-12, and for composition writing in grades 1-12, will be developed during the 1978-1979 school year. A policy statement concerning the teaching and evaluation of spelling, grades 1-12, will be developed by September 1978.

It is anticipated that the standards in basic skills in grades 1-5 will be completed by June 1978. The potential impact of the standards will be examined from many viewpoints - legal, social, and education - before the findings and recommendations are presented to the school committee.

Materials will be available following school committee approval of the Standards in Basic Skills.

BROCKTON

CONTACT PERSON:

Daniel Kulick
Administrative Assistant to
the Superintendent
43 Crescent Street
Brockton, MA 02401
(617) 588-7800 Ext. 541

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 21,572
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,510

A system-wide competency-based education task force was formed in the fall of 1977 with the aim of developing a competency-based education program tailored to the needs and aspirations of the Brockton public schools. Sub-committees with broader representation were formed in reading, communications, mathematics, testing, special education, and public relations. An open house was held to generate interest and solicit community input.

Although actual competency-based testing has not begun yet, several standardized assessment instruments (such as McGraw Hill, Educational Testing Service tests, etc.) have been reviewed. Brockton anticipates using test results as a diagnostic and instrumental tool. Further research is necessary before a decision can be made about using test results as criteria for graduation.

In June 1978 a proposal, including guidelines and recommendations, will be presented to the superintendent and the school committee. During the 1978-79 school year, specifics of the program will be developed, with pilot implementation in the 1979-80 school year.

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONTACT PERSON:

John F. Canavan
Superintendent of Schools
Dudley-Charlton Regional High School
P.O. Box 97
Dudley, MA 01570
(617) 248-7334

* Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 3192
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,185

A competency-based program in occupational skills entitled the "Ram's Horn Program" has been developed to insure the student's ability to function adequately in a work situation. This program provides work experiences in production, printing, design, and sales in Dudley-Charlton Regional High School's own store in Dudley.

A list of Ram's Horn competency skills includes: calculating wages, making change, using a time clock, determining equipment needed for a job, and developing the ability to work under pressure.

Future plans include consideration of additional competencies, and the possible use of tests.

* This refers to the city or town where the school is located and may not accurately describe the other cities or towns who are members of the regional district.

FITCHBURG

CONTACT PERSON:

Edward F. Reidy, Jr.
Director, Project Competency
1047 Main Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420
(617) 343-6421

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 6660
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,664

The Fitchburg Public Schools decided to focus more instructional attention on the application of basic skills by developing and integrating the current curriculum with materials oriented to life skills. As a first step, students in grades 8-12 were tested to determine their mastery of basic writing and life skills. This information was used for planning, measuring, and developing new curricula.

The Fitchburg school committee launched Project Competency intending that students master life skills by the end of the ninth grade. Intermediary benchmarks in the third and sixth grades were established to systematically monitor student progress. This is accomplished in a variety of ways: interviews, work samples, paper and pencil tests, performance reviews, and committee reviews. This monitoring system was also designed to insure that remedial work could begin in time to allow students to master life skills by the end of the ninth grade.

With the help of an evaluation specialist and a mathematics specialist, Fitchburg teachers developed the Skills Achievement Monitoring System (SAM) to keep students and teachers informed of student progress. Teachers established skills for each grade level and developed a test to measure each skill. The Skills Achievement Monitoring System for mathematics was instituted in 1976. Tests for grades 2-8 have already been developed and will be expanded to all elementary and high school grades. Tests are administered every six instructional weeks, scored by a computer, and reported for each student,

noting strengths and weaknesses. This system has been extremely useful in helping teachers prepare individualized instruction in mathematics skills-building. A Skills Achievement Monitoring system is currently being piloted in a Vocabulary Improvement Program (SAM-VIP). This system focuses on improving student vocabulary and, indirectly, reading comprehension. The program was pilot tested with twenty teachers and five hundred students in grades 4, 5, and 6 during the 1977-78 school year. Current plans call for testing at eight week intervals. McGraw-Hill's Plus 10 Vocabulary materials constitute the major curriculum and in-service training materials for teachers.

Strong teacher participation was a major factor in the development of Fitchburg's program and materials. Several position papers and materials about Project Competency are available:

- "Project Competency: Position Paper No. 1: Life Skills: Development and Assessment"
- "Skills Achievement Monitoring: Vocabulary Improvement Program (SAM-VIP)"
- "Fitchburg Public Schools: Overview Sheet"
- "SAM: Instructional Objectives and Sample Questions: Mathematics, Levels 2-8"
- "A Parent's Guide to SAM"

FOXBOROUGH

CONTACT PERSON:

Thomas Armstrong
Mathematics Coordinator
Foxborough High School
South Street
Foxborough, MA 02035
(617) 543-4811 Ext. 145

Kind of Community: residential suburb
Student Population: 3910
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,550

Minimum competencies and competency objectives have been defined for seven areas in mathematics. These are number and numeration, arithmetic computations, uses of variables, estimation and approximation, measurement and geometry, tables and graphs, and prediction and statistics.

In September 1977, locally-developed tests were administered to all students in grades 9-12 for the purposes of collecting baseline data and determining the validity and the reliability of the test items. Based upon the results of this analysis, two forms of the test will be revised as needed, and other forms will be generated.

It is expected that any student successfully completing one year of high school mathematics will have the skills necessary to pass the competency examination in mathematics. It is recommended that a student who fails the mathematics competency examination should be required to enroll in a mathematics program for the next school year. Guidelines have been developed which list the grade in which the student has taken and failed the exam, and the appropriate course which should be taken to develop competency in mathematics. Beginning with the 1980-1981 school year, twelfth graders who have not passed the competency requirements will not be awarded a diploma. However, when a student successfully completes the examination, it will be noted on his/her permanent record.

GEORGETOWN

CONTACT PERSON:

Vincent A. Scaduto, Principal
Perley Elementary School
51 North Street
Georgetown, MA 01833
(617) 352-8112

Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 1580
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,552

An informal testing instrument was developed by the elementary mathematics committee to test students in grades 1-6. Tests are administered in the fall and late spring of each year. Results from these tests, along with teacher's comments and perceptions, are recorded on the Mathematics Skills Record Sheet developed by the elementary staff as a way of recording student growth and proficiency in mathematics and related areas. Test results are used for a variety of purposes, such as grouping, and monitoring a child's progress and growth during the year. Tests are now being up-dated to include metrics.

An elementary reading/language arts committee is currently examining the feasibility of employing the Scott Foresman Skills Assessment Sheet for the entire elementary population.

A testing committee has met for one year on a regular basis, addressing such issues as purpose and validity of testing, the needs met by particular tests, and the feasibility of creating local tests. The committee recently decided that standardized achievement testing will occur in grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 each spring using the California Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills and the Basic Academic Aptitude Test. Kindergarteners will be tested with the new Metropolitan Test for Kindergarten. The committee plans to annually review the value of these tests.

HOPEDALE

CONTACT PERSON:

Donald Hayes
Superintendent of Schools
25 Adin Street
Hopedale, MA 01747
(617) 473-3080

Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 933
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,832

In the spring of 1975, teachers and department heads began a general curriculum review in preparation for the development of minimum competency standards. Building administrators, the superintendent, school committee members, and outside consultants, were involved. Participants visited schools involved in developing competency programs and reviewed available literature and materials. Minimum competency standards have been developed to accurately define Hopedale's education program, and to provide every resident and student with a clear definition of minimum standards that each student must meet in English and mathematics. All minimum standards are presently subject-area oriented.

Standards and appropriate tests were developed by staff members using available time and time specifically provided for that purpose. A number of released days during the school year were granted by the school committee, beginning with the 1974-75 school year. These days were defined as time to work on curriculum development. Summer employment was also provided.

Standards that were developed are outlined and explained in two booklets: "Minimal Level of Competency - Mathematics", and "Minimum Requirements in English". One of the major goals within the mathematics curriculum, completed in August 1977, is "to develop those concepts and/or computational skills used in daily life, both in and out of the classroom." For example, the four fundamental arithmetic operations - adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing - must be successfully applied to whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. The student must also be able to demonstrate the ability to use mathematics in an

everyday setting for such purposes as consumer credit, balancing a checkbook, and computing interest.

The English minimum competencies published in August of 1976 include the areas of basic reading skills, mechanics, grammar and usage, speaking and listening, writing, and literature. "Standards for All Forms of Written Work" is a guide for teachers in all subject areas so that uniformity in writing can be achieved in all classes, minimizing confusion among classes.

The English pilot assessment instrument was published in September 1977, and was administered during the 1977-78 year on a pilot basis. Validation of this test is in progress. The mathematics test will be completed during the 1977-78 school year and the same student population will pilot the test. When all mathematics and English tests are approved, at least one alternate form of the test will be developed. Consultants' advice will also be used to develop the final form of assessments.

Curriculum response has been two-fold. First, the development of standards aided teachers tremendously in planning instruction in traditional courses. Second, two courses, Math Laboratory and English Laboratory, are under development. These will be ungraded, individualized, contractual laboratory settings which will be required for students in grades 9 through 12 who do not satisfactorily complete the minimum requirements. Once completed, these courses will satisfy the English and mathematics graduation requirement. A student with specific limitations can be exempted from these requirements. These minimum requirements have been established as prerequisites to graduation, not as substitutes for the previous graduation requirements.

Costs have been primarily indirect through the large amounts of time and energy contributed by staff personnel. Direct monetary costs are reasonable and include: salaries (other than regular wage - approximately $5,000); consultation fees, supplies and materials (approximately $2,000); release days; and CETA funds for some clerical responsibilities.

HUDSON

CONTACT PEOPLE:

J. Bryan Sullivan, Math Chairman K-12
Carol Compton, English Chairwoman K-12

Hudson High School
Brigham Street
Hudson, MA 01748
(617) 568-8361

Kind of Community: residential suburb
Student Population: 3932
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,285

Hudson has considered competencies and minimum instructional objectives at the elementary and high school level. Mathematics teachers established thirty-three minimal objectives for grades 2-8. These objectives are the basis for the mathematics program for grades K-8. During kindergarten and grade 1, students are given initial exposure to arithmetic ideas. A guide entitled "Mathematics Curriculum Guides, Minimal and Competency Objectives: K-8" includes minimal mathematics objectives that must be mastered by all students. The guide includes categories such as numeration, measurement, money, fractions, and decimals, and is designed to assist the teacher in organizing and planning the year's work.

Mathematics testing began on a pilot basis in 1976-77. No students were exempted from the tests. Three student papers per class were selected on a random basis to further identify student weaknesses. Passing grades have not been defined although a median was determined. Teachers in grades 3-8 were provided with released time to work with the mathematics department chairperson, and to write tests.

In the English department, a language arts committee was formed consisting of volunteer representatives from grades 1-6, and departmentalized English teachers in grades 7-12. Minimal competencies which correlate with existing curriculum guides were identified for grades 1-12. Currently, standardized English tests such as the Stanford Achievement Test and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test are used in grades 2-10. Locally developed tests include an English usage test focusing on language and composition for grades 9-12 and a reading and writing inventory for grade 9.

At the high school level, Hudson piloted the Foxborough, Massachusetts High School Competency Test, and uses the competency test developed by the Phoenix, Arizona Public Schools as a pre-test; Part I in grade 7, and Part II in grade 10. Through the tests deficiencies are identified, work is assigned, and the same test is given several months later. The results are recorded as a quiz grade. All mathematics courses have both teacher developed mid-terms and standardized finals which count as 15% of a student's term grade. Standardized tests include the Lankton (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich) for algebra I, the Blyth (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich), for algebra II, and the Cooperative Test (Educational Testing Service) for geometry, pre-calculus (trigonometry), and calculus. All basic, general mathematics, review mathematics and algebra-Part I finals are teacher-made. A system-wide testing schedule for grades 9-12 is available.

MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONTACT PEOPLE:

Gerald H. Less
Director of Pupil Services
(617) 861-6500 Ext. 282

Nancy Newbert
School Psychologist
(617) 861-6500 Ext. 384

Minuteman Regional Vocational
Technical School District
Lexington, MA 02173

* Kind of Community: residential suburb
Student Population: 1250
Per Pupil Expenditure: $3,189

Minuteman uses a variety of tests to help faculty and students identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students and classes. These instruments concentrate on competencies in reading, mathematics, and library skills. The primary focus of the overall testing program is curriculum development and remediation. However, the tests are only one aspect of the measurement of a student's progress and competency. Other aspects employed are: knowledge about specific learning problems, observations by senior teachers, and evaluation by vocational/academic teachers.

The class of 1978 is expected to be competitive with a national student population. Each senior was given multiple opportunities to demonstrate his/her ninth grade competency in reading and mathematics. The English and mathematics departments were given tests with national norms, in addition to the opportunity to develop in-house testing instruments. Seniors who do not meet the ninth grade competency level in reading or mathematics establish an individual contract with the senior teacher for individualized work. Re-testing is conducted on a monthly basis.

Applicants who enter Minuteman at grade 9, are given the Stanford Diagnostic Math and Reading Tests and/or the California Achievement Tests (CAT),

---

* This refers to the city or town where the school is located and may not accurately describe the other cities or towns who are members of the regional district.

in addition to aptitude, ability, and interest tests. During their years at Minuteman, students are given the Stanford Test of Academic Skills and/or the California Achievement Tests. The senior competency measurement includes the results of the above tests to determine a grade 9 competency level. The Everyday Skills Test and the Individualized Computational Skills Program are also given to all seniors. A Library Skills Test was written by the library staff, and is administered with the Reference Skills Section of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills.

At present, program managers and senior teachers establish and enforce minimum competency standards in trade skills for high school graduation. The complete objective testing program is evaluated yearly by the director of guidance, the administrator of special education, the school psychologist, the mathematics and English department heads, and developmental reading and mathematics personnel.

NEEDHAM

CONTACT PERSON:

Calvin L. Cleveland
Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum and Instruction
1330 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02192
(617) 444-4100

Kind of Community: residential suburb
Student Population: 6,983
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,762

Competency testing was inaugurated in Needham during the 1977-78 school year. The Senior High Assessment of Reading Performance (SHARP) was administered to all ninth graders. Analysis of the test data will identify students who need special instruction. Needham is currently conducting further research on SHARP and other testing instruments prior to formal adoption of a competency test.

The elementary social studies department experimented with a testing program in geography and economics in the spring of 1978. Tests were given to sixth graders in April and/or May in geography, and to the same age group at the end of the year in economics. The economics test was developed in cooperation with the Economics Education Council

The Pennsylvania Program for Social Studies' Competency is under consideration for secondary students.

OXFORD

CONTACT PERSON:

Francis Driscoll
Superintendent of Schools
5 Sigourney Street
Oxford, MA 01540
(617) 987-0246

Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 2,842
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,344

In September 1975, the Oxford School Committee appointed a committee to investigate the minimal competency issue. The committee included a student, a lay person, three high school teachers, a school committee member, high school administrators, and the superintendent of schools. After seeking advice from the high school faculty, the committee identified seven areas in which students should be expected to prove their competency: consumerism, mathematics, democratic processes, written and oral communication, reading, and "life coping" skills.

Mathematics tests were developed as the first step in this process. During June 1976, test items were solicited from students, teachers, and parents. Tests, developed over the summer, were piloted in the fall of 1976. During the school year 1976-77, test items were developed in "life-coping" skills, democratic processes, reading, consumerism, and mathematics. Test items were sampled with students and tests were revised on two different occasions. Much of this work took place during in-service workshops with teachers.

Tests were approved by the school committee, and were administered in January 1978 to 198 ninth grade students. Test results were compared with the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills taken by the same group of students.

In order to improve test reliability, additional test items are being developed for the 1978-79 school year. A test on oral communication has

been postponed.

Guidance counselors receive each student's name and his/her test score by competency area. Remedial work has been provided for some students who failed all or part of the test administered in January 1978.

Successful completion of the Oxford Minimal Competency Examination is not a requirement for high school graduation. However, successful completion of the test is included in the official record of each student.

More specific information about the Oxford Minimal Competency Examination may be obtained by contacting Roger Bacon, Assistant High School Principal, Oxford High School, Main Street, Oxford, Massachusetts 01540, (617) 987-8127, or Bruce Denson, Mathematics Department Chairman, at the same address.

PITTSFIELD

CONTACT PEOPLE:

Norman C. Najimy
Director of English
P.O. Box 1187
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-1234 Ext. 226/227

Gilbert K. French
Director of Mathematics
P.O. Box 1187
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-1234 Ext. 226/227

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 11,868
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,552

The Pittsfield Public Schools use both locally and nationally developed tests. The California Achievement Test (CAT) is used in the elementary grades, while the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered in junior high school. Pittsfield's locally-developed tests are not formal "competency tests." Mathematics tests were developed and administered for all grades. In addition, a program was initiated to implement objectives for writing across all subjects.

A curriculum guide, "Verbal Communications Competencies, K-6", which includes listening comprehension, speaking, usage, reading comprehension, writing/composition, writing/grammar, writing/usage in exposition, and writing/mechanics is now available. Specific objectives are listed under each category, and a grid specifies at which grade each objective should be introduced, developed, and mastered. Tests have been devised to assist the teacher in measuring student's progress. There are two forms of each test - a pre-test and a post-test. Passing grades are left to the teacher's discretion. In addition, a directory of resources which teachers may use to help students in a particular skill is included. This guide has been highly rated by the National Council of Teachers of English, and is listed in their 1977 Recommended Curriculum Guides.

A composition guide for grades 7-12, entitled "Compcraft", includes objectives and lesson plans for teaching various genre of expository writing such as writing for survival, persuasion, personal purposes, and description. The guide includes descriptions of the writing process, suggestions for evaluating students' writing and a checklist for students when revising their own writing.

QUINCY

CONTACT PERSON:

Lawrence P. Creedon
Superintendent of Schools
70 Coddington Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 471-0100

Kind of Community: industrial suburb
Student Population: 15,426
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,931

Functional competencies in Quincy have been defined as "those demonstrated skills and acquired knowledge which enable the individual to function in society effectively, independently and with potential for growth." Quincy's functional competency curriculum has been developed in accordance with this student centered learning system. Objectives are related to, and contingent upon, basic survival skills. These skills include being an intelligent consumer; a community citizen with an understanding of government, laws, and social responsibilities; a worker with occupational knowledge; and an individual aware of social health needs.

Quincy's schedule for developing a competency program includes identification of functional competencies in each subject area; presentation of recommendations by committees of coordinators, principals, teachers, and parents to the school committee and the superintendent; and developing tests for basic skills and functional competencies. Implementation of the competency program is expected during the 1979-80 academic year.

Lawrence P. Creedon, Superintendent of Schools, has developed the following four position papers which are available for distribution:

- "Functional Competency Performance Objectives"
- "Minimum Standards"
- "A Student Centered Learning System: An Overview"
- "Thinking About Learning"

QUABBIN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CONTACT PERSON:

Corridon Trask, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools
Box 667
Barre, MA 01005
(617) 355-4668

* Kind of Community: small town or other community
Student Population: 996
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,793

Quabbin utilizes a variety of competency-based testing programs at the elementary and high school level. During the 1975-76 school year, minimal skills testing methods and instruments were developed for all students in grades 3 and 6. The rationale for this action was that careful analysis of test results would allow for proper intervention and individualized attention for students unable to pass the tests. Teachers were encouraged to participate in the process of classifying test objectives, selecting and creating test items to match chosen objectives, field testing assessment instruments, and revising tests and methods. Teachers were also asked to supplement test scores with reports of student strengths and weaknesses in the tested skill areas.

The competency testing and intervention program in Quabbin is supplemented by the Skills Inventory Method of the Fountain Valley Reading System at grades 1-6, in order to facilitate individualized instruction. In addition, regular classroom teachers administer minimal skills tests in May to all grade three students, except those exempted by the Coordinator of Special Students. All tests are locally developed criterion-referenced tests. Tested areas are reading comprehension, oral language, structural analysis, dictionary skills, spelling, written expression, and mathematics. Students must correctly answer 80% of the items. Students who do not obtain this score are screened further

* This refers to the city or town where the school is located and may not accurately describe the other cities or towns who are members of the regional district.

to determine their area for remedial work.

In April of each year, sixth graders are given minimal skills tests in reading comprehension, language skills, writing skills, spelling, listening skills, study skills, and mathematics. These tests are administered by classroom teachers, but corrected by assessment aides. All students must get 80% correct. All students' results, plus achievement data gathered from report cards and teacher testimony help determine placement for grade seven.

In 1978, a formal grade 7 Minimal Skills Intervention Program was instituted. All students who have serious deficiencies in minimal skills must participate in this program.

On the high school level, students are required to take a battery of tests, both locally-developed and standardized,at the end of grade 10. The tests include the Senior High Assessment of Reading Performance (SHARP); arithmetic; citizenship concepts and skills including history; health/first aid; environmental concepts and skills; and any two of economics, consumerism, and local/state government.

A recent school committee policy mandates that all members of the class of 1980 pass the sophomore level minimal competency exam to graduate from high school. Graduates must also earn a minimum of 100 course credits.

Alternative ways of measuring student competencies are also under consideration in Quabbin. Individualized remedial programs are the responsibility of regular staff members. As the program develops, retesting opportunities will be an essential part of the Minimum Competencies Program. A booklet developed by the Quabbin Public Schools entitled "Important Guidelines for Developing and Maintaining Effective Competency-Based Instructional and Testing Practices" is available.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL DISTRICT	POLICY-MAKING GROUP	COMPETENCY AREA(S)	TESTING IMPLEMENTED						TESTING BEING
			Standardized			In-house			
			elementary	middle	high	elementary	middle	high	elementary
Acton/Boxborough	Citizen's Advisory Committee	all academic areas (by 1978)	CTBS used until CR tests developed.		STEP-gr.10		CR test in Math	CR test in English	CR tests, all
Agawam	committee established by superintendent	math, reading and language arts			SAT				
Andover	?	all academic areas			Shaw&Berhl SCAT/STEP in math SAT - Eng.			pilot tests in Eng., Soc.St., Guid.&Math	
Attleboro	committee of school personnel	occupational competencies and all academic areas	MTK-Kind. CTBS-Grs. 1-8		SHARP-gr. 9-12 (pilot basis)				
Berkshire Hills Regional	committee of school personnel	basic academic and career oriented skills						all subjects - grs. 9-12	
Boston	committee of parents, school personnel and students	reading, writing, spelling, grammar and math.				CR reading tests - grs. 1-8			CR compositio grs. 1-12
Brockton	committee of school personnel	reading, communication skills and math.							McGraw Hill, ET been reviewed.
Dudley-Charlton	?	occupational skills required in a work situ.							Future plans in tion of tests.
Fitchburg	committee of school personnel	math, language arts and life skills				SAM in math- grs.2-8 (piloted) SAM-VIP-grs. 4,5,6(pilot)			
Foxborough	?	mathematics						math pilot test- grs. 9-12	
Georgetown	testing committee	math, language arts	CTBS and BAA-grs. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 MTK-Kind.			math test- grs. 1-6			
Hopedale	committee of school personnel	English, mathematics						pilot test in English	
Hudson	committee of school personnel	math, language arts	SAT, SDRT-grs. 2-10		math-Lankton, Blyth, and CT	pilot math test grs. 2-8		PPSSCT-grs 7-10, pilot FMSCT	competency test grs. 1-12 to be June 1978.
Minuteman Regional	committee of school personnel evaluate testing program	reading, math, library skills			EST, ref. skills sec of CTBS, SDMT&SDRT				
Needham	?	reading, social studies			SHARP-gr.9				geography, economics piloted in gr. 6
Oxford	committe of student, la person & school representatives	cnsmrsm, dmcrtc.proc., oral&wrtn. comun., rdg.						subtests of Oxford's Min. Comp. Ex. piloted	
Pittsfield	?	math, communication skills	CAT	CAT-gr. 7 ITBS		locally developed math tests administered to all grades			staff-developed ting evaluation
Quabbin	committee of school personnel	language arts, reading & citizenship			SHARP- gr. 10	CR minimal skills tests-grs. 3 and 6		math, citizenship test battery-gr.10	
Quincy	school personnel	basic survival skills							tests to be dev 1979-80 school
Springfield	school committee	basic academic skills	CTBS-gr.4	CTBS-gr. 6	CTBS-gr. 9				
Worcester	school committee	basic academic skills			BSAT-gr.10				BSAT-

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

SIDERED	TESTS USED TO: determine graduation eligibility	revise curriculum	identify learning problems	establish local norms	COMMENTS/OTHER INFORMATION
high					
cts-grs.K-12		X remediation			Instructional objectives developed in all subject areas for grs. K-12 and CR tests for all areas to be completed by 1978.
civics, citizenship, science and health	X (as of 78-79)	X meet individual needs		X	3 phase program: I-establish competency levels in LA,reading & math; II-establish comp.levels in civics, citizenship & science; III-establish specific requirements for graduation.
social studies and guidance	X (info. unclear)	X remediation		X	
			X		Terminal objectives devised for all subjects as of March 1978. Occupational Competency Program has also been produced.
career oriented skills	X		X		Graduation requirements divided into 3 phases: basic skills, maturation and awareness experiences, career oriented skills. Phases I and II are applicable to the class of 1981.
ting test- CR reading- grs. 9-12					Basic skills for which standards and CR tests are currently being developed include reading, composition writing, spelling, grammar and math.
others have			X		Recommendations to be presented to the school committee in June 1978. Pilot implementation to occur in the 1979-80 school year.
considera-					Students work in school-owned store to gain competency skills in things such as calculating wages, making change, and determining the equipment needed for a job.
		X individualized instruction			Teachers have been heavily involved in all developmental activities. Students master "life skills" by gr. 9 with intermediate benchmarks at the end of grs. 3 and 6.
		X	X		Math Skills Record Sheet developed by elementary staff to monitor student growth and proficiency in math and related areas.
full implementation of math & Eng. tests	X (by 1980-81)	X through math and English laboratories)	X		Competencies developed in English and math and tests are being developed and piloted. Individualized, contractual labs planned for students who do not satisfactorily complete minimum requirements.
glish for leted by					Math objectives developed for grs. 2-8, pilot testing in 1976-77. Language arts competencies and tests being developed. Competency test for grs.K-8 to be completed by June 1979.
		X remediation	X		Other aspects of measuring student competency include teacher evaluations and observation by senior teacher. Seniors who do not reach gr.9 competency levels contract for individualized work.
PPSSC-grs. 9-12		X remediation	X		
test in written communication		X remediation	X		Committee identified areas in which a student must prove competent: consumerism, math, democratic processes, oral and written communication, reading and life coping skills.
. ETS wri-					Materials developed include a curriculum guide - "Verbal Communications Competencies, K-6", a directory of competency resources for teachers, and a composition guide - "Compcraft" - for grs. 7-12.
	X (as of '80)	X individualized instruction	X		Test results and teacher reports identify students in need of intervention and individualized attention. Formal Minimal Skills Intervention Program begins in gr. 7.
by the					Functional competency curriculum compiled in accordance with Student Centered Learning System. Objectives identified as they relate to basic survival skills.
					No changes in graduation requirements are anticipated until substantive discussion and research are completed.
					Use of BSAT results are currently being discussed as well as competency standards to be set.

Abbreviations Used in Summary Chart

BAA - Basic Academic Aptitude
BSAT - Basic Skills Assessment Test
CAT - California Achievement Test
crsmrsm. - consumerism
comp. - competency
CR - criterion referenced
CT - Cooperative Test (developed by ETS)
CTBS - Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills
dmcrtc. proc. - democratic processes
EST - Everyday Skills Test
ETS - Educational Testing Service
FMHSCT - Foxborough, Massachusetts High School Competency Test
ICSP - Individualized Computational Skills Program
ITBS - Iowa Test of Basic Skills
LA - language arts
Min. Comp. Ex. - Minimal Competency Examination (Oxford)
MTK - Metropolitan Test for Kindergarten
oral & wrtn. comun. - oral and written communication
PPSSCT - Phoenix Public School System's Competency Test
PPSSC - Pennsylvania Program for Social Studies Competency
rdg. - reading
SAM - Skills Achievement Monitoring system
SAM-VIP - Skills Achievement Monitoring-Vocabulary Improvement Program
SAT - Stanford Achievement Test
SCAT/STEP - School and College Ability Test/Sequential Tests of Educational Progress
SDMT - Stanford Diagnostic Math Test
SDRT - Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
SFSAS - Scott Foresman Skills Assessment Sheet
SHARP - Senior High Assessment of Reading Progress
situ. - situation
Soc. St. - social studies
STAS - Stanford Test of Academic Skills

Elizabeth J. Maillett
May, 1978

SPRINGFIELD

CONTACT PERSON:

John F. Howell
Director of Research
Springfield Public Schools
195 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 733-2132

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 29,056
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,573

During the 1976-77 school year, Springfield tested all students in grades 4, 6, and 9 using the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. A short ability test was also administered to determine a level of achievement which could be measured against a student's future progress.

Graduation requirements are currently established by the school committee. No changes in current school policies or programs are anticipated until substantive debate and research are completed.

A paper by John Howell, "Minimal Competency Testing: Some Remarks", dated February 23, 1978 is available for distribution.

WORCESTER

CONTACT PERSON:

Leo P. Glennon
Director of Measurement
Worcester Public Schools
20 Irving Street
Worcester, MA 01609
(617) 798-2521 Ext. 10

Kind of Community: big city
Student Population: 27,957
Per Pupil Expenditure: $1,657

In 1977, the Worcester School Committee voted to "establish a comprehensive examination of practical subjects." Following this action, the Educational Testing Service's Basic Skills Assessment Test was selected and administered to 1,480 10th grade students in September 1977. Results of the test have been summarized and forwarded to the administration. Discussion is currently underway about the use of test results and the development of competency standards. Future plans include administering the Basic Skills Assessment Test to 8th grade students in the winter of 1978.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN PRELIMINARY STAGES OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

These school districts are in the initial stages of developing competency programs. The contact people listed below responded to our questionnaire, and provided us with information about the status of their plans. Although these programs have not reached the stage to be included in this booklet, we acknowledge their contribution to the development of competency programs in Massachusetts.

- **Amesbury**
  David E. Lawliss
  Principal, Amesbury High School
  Highland Street
  Amesbury, MA 01913
  (617) 388-4800

- **Amherst-Pelham**
  Donald B. Frizzle
  Superintendent of Schools
  Chestnut Street
  Amherst, MA 01002
  (413) 549-3690

- **Braintree**
  John Monbouquette
  Superintendent of Schools
  10 Tremont Street
  Braintree, MA 02184
  (617) 848-4000

- **Cambridge**
  Richard Phelps
  Director of Language Arts
  159 Thorndike Street
  Cambridge, MA 02141
  (617) 492-8000 Ext. 145

- **Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical High School**
  F. Timothy Carroll
  Assistant Superintendent
  Pleasant Lake Avenue
  Harwich, MA 02645
  (617) 432-4500

- **Dedham**
  Harry W. McKay
  Superintendent of Schools
  30 Whiting Avenue
  Dedham, MA 02026
  (617) 326-5622

  Peter M. Smith
  Principal
  Dedham High School
  30 Whiting Avenue
  Dedham, MA 02026
  (617) 326-4473

- **Hamilton-Wenham**
  William B. Fisher
  Superintendent of Schools
  775 Bay Road
  South Hamilton, MA 01982
  (617) 468-4464

- Holyoke

  John Mahoney
  Director of Projects
  98 Suffolk Street
  Holyoke, MA 01040
  (413) 534-5678

- Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

  David L. Levington
  Superintendent of Schools
  390 Lincoln Road
  Sudbury, MA 01776
  (617) 443-9961

- Melrose

  Robert E. Bachelder
  Associate Superintendent of Schools
  235 West Foster Street
  Melrose, MA 02176
  (617) 665-2284

- Northborough-Southborough

  Dennis DiSalvo
  Assistant Superintendent and
  Curriculum Director K-12
  Bartlett Street
  Northborough, MA 01532
  (617) 393-2478

- Palmer

  William J. Nelligan
  Superintendent of Schools
  24 Converse Street
  Palmer, MA 01069
  (413) 283-9813

- Pioneer Valley Regional School District

  Edwin F. Harrington
  Superintendent of Schools
  75 Main Street
  Northfield, MA 01360
  (413) 498-2911

- Shawsheen Valley Vocational Technical High School

  Benjamin Wolk
  Superintendent of Schools
  100 Cook Street
  Billerica, MA 01866
  (617) 667-2111

- Stoneham

  Fred Kiamie
  Vice Principal, Stoneham High School
  101 Central Street
  Stoneham, MA 02180
  (617) 438-0646

- Sturbridge

  Roland W. Wilson
  Superintendent of Schools
  Brookfield Road
  Sturbridge, MA 01566
  (413) 347-9014

- Wakefield

Stephen F. Maio
Superintendent of Schools
525 Main Street
Wakefield, MA 01880
(617) 245-6307

- Ware

Stanley M. Koziol
Superintendent of Schools
Ware Elementary School
Off Gould Road
Ware, MA 01082
(413) 967-4271

SECTION III

RESOURCES

POLICY ON BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

In November 1975, the State Board of Education began a major policy review of the need for minimum standards for high school graduation in Massachusetts. An ad hoc advisory committee was formed by the Board in March 1976 to assist with this review. In June 1977, the Board expanded this advisory group and formally established the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements. The Committee was charged to carefully study and prepare recommendations for the Board regarding the establishment of minimum standards of competency in certain basic skill areas to be achieved by students prior to graduation from high school. After more than two years of deliberations on this subject, including public hearings and meetings in all regions of the Commonwealth, the Board has received the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

The Board of Education approves the Report of the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation requirements (attached). It adopts its recommendations as indicated below, modified on the basis of formal position papers received from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Principals, the Massachusetts Middle/Junior High School Principals Association, the Massachusetts Association of Elementary School Principals, and the State Student Advisory Council.

Throughout the two years of public discussion, certain conclusions became clear:

* There is a problem that needs correcting. Parents, teachers, students, administrators, school committee members, employers and the general public are not satisfied with the level of basic skills competency some students demonstrate by the time of graduation from high school. No major objection was raised by any group about the existence of a problem during two years of deliberations.

* To a great extent, the credibility of public schools and the educational community depends upon the degree to which the public believes this problem is being addressed vigorously and corrected in the immediate future.

* Resolution of this problem should provide for maximum local involvement under the leadership of school committees and school superintendents.

* The State Board of Education has a responsibility for providing leadership and assistance so that the problem of basic skills competency is identified appropriately and corrective action is taken locally to address this problem constructively.

* Efforts to improve competency in the basic skills should begin before the high school level. Emphasis should be on diagnosing learning needs and adjusting the regular curriculum to these needs so that all students can attain minimum standards, rather than on testing and retention.

The Board of Education stresses that the purpose of this Policy is to improve the attainment of basic skills competency by students in public schools of the Commonwealth. Specifically, the Board adopts the Advisory Committee's position that:

> "The purpose of a basic skills competency program is to assist all students in achieving mastery of basic skills prior to high school graduation through the provision of appropriate curriculum, instruction, and evaluation."

To accomplish this purpose, the Board of Education approves the following plan:

1. Each school committee will have the responsibility to establish minimum standards for basic skills competency in the areas indicated in #2 below, at the early elementary, later elementary and secondary grade levels by no later than September 1980.

   a. School committees will decide by which specific grade or grades these standards should be attained and how they will be measured at each of the levels above.

   b. School committees will provide for public participation in the development and periodic review of these minimum standards by parents, teachers, administrators, employers, and - at the secondary level - by students.

2. Each school committee will have the responsibility to establish minimum standards for the basic skills areas of mathematics, reading and writing by no later than September 1980 and minimum standards for basic skills areas of listening and speaking by no later than September 1981.

   a. At the early elementary and later elementary levels, the minimum standards will be determined by each school committee.

   b. At the secondary level, school committees will have the responsibility to establish minimum standards which incorporate and are no less than the specifications for mathematics and communications (reading, writing, listening, speaking) recommended by the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements, subject to continued refinement of these specifications by the Advisory Committee in early 1978-79.

3. Each school committee will have the responsibility for evaluating the basic skills competency of each student at the early elementary, later elementary and secondary levels.

   a. School committees will decide at which grade or grades an evaluation will take place for each level, provided that at the secondary level this evaluation will be initiated no later than the beginning of grade 9. Once a secondary student has demonstrated proficiency on the secondary level basic skills competency test(s), he or she will not have to be tested again for this purpose.

   b. School committees will have the responsibility to decide which evaluation instrument or instruments will be used at the early elementary and later elementary levels.

c. At the secondary level, school committees will have the option of using (1) a basic skills competency test developed by the State Department of Education, (2) commercially available tests from a list approved by the State Department of Education, or (3) locally utilized or developed tests approved by the State Department of Education as being comparable to either (1) or (2).

d. Students and parents should be given the opportunity to see the corrected evaluation instruments so they can be informed of strengths and weaknesses in basic skills competency.

e. School committees are encouraged to review their existing testing programs with the aim of incorporating this Policy within existing expenditures for student testing. These expenditures will be reimburseable under state aid.

4. Each school committee shall annually certify and report to the public and to the State Board of Education the number and percentage of students who have and have not attained the minimum standards for basic skills competency determined by the school committee for the early elementary, later elementary and secondary levels. By no later than 1982-83, the data reported for the secondary level will be for grade 11 or 12.

5. The provisions of this Policy shall be applied as follows to students in special education and bilingual education programs as defined by applicable state laws.

   a. The application of minimum standards for basic skills competency to students determined to be in need of special education in accordance with G.L. Chapter 71B (Chapter 766) shall be at the determination of the evaluation team responsible for developing and approving the Individual Educational Plan for each special needs student. The evaluation team shall determine whether the special needs student should be evaluated in terms of the minimum standards for basic skills competency and whether the results of this evaluation should be included in the aggregate test results in #4 above. Such decisions should be recorded in the Individual Educational Plan.

   b. Students identified, screened and enrolled in programs governed by G.L. Chapter 71A (Transitional Bilingual Education Act) shall not be subject to the provisions of this Policy. Students who have completed Transitional Bilingual Education programs in accordance with G.L. Chapter 71A shall be considered as any other student under this Policy.

6. The purpose of this Policy is for school committees to determine minimum expectations for basic skills competency for the <u>regular</u> educational program of the public schools in Massachusetts. The educational specifications for mathematics and communications skills recommended by the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements were developed by teachers on the basis of what should be minimum instructional expectations from the regular curriculum offerings of public schools. If these expectations are not being adequately fulfilled, the regular curriculum should be adjusted or modified. The purpose of this Policy is <u>not</u> to establish a new or separate instructional program beyond the support services normally provided in public schools of the Commonwealth.

a. If, by the beginning of grade 11, a student has not been able to satisfactorily attain the minimum standards of basic skills competency, as determined by each school committee, the principal of the school attended by the student shall determine whether the student should be referred for evaluation in accordance with the Chapter 766 Regulations (Section 315.1) to determine if that student needs special education. (Nothing contained herein should preclude referral at an earlier grade level in accordance with normal practices of school districts under Chapter 71B.)

b. The purpose both of the minimum standards and the evaluations called for by this Policy is to assist in diagnosing student needs and in identifying curriculum areas which should be adjusted or modified. The purpose is not to establish a new condition for promotion or graduation. These policies of school committees should continue to be based on several criteria and several sources of information rather than on any single test.

7. The Board of Education's Regional Education Councils, with the assistance of a subcommittee designated by the Council, and with staff support from the Department of Education, shall be responsible for reviewing the implementation of this Policy on Basic Skills Improvement in each region.

   a. By September 1980, each school committee shall affirm to the appropriate Department Regional Education Center that it has established the program called for by this Policy at the early elementary and later elementary levels.

   b. By September 1980, each school committee shall submit to the appropriate Department Regional Education Center its secondary level program for basic skills improvement. The Regional Education Council shall review each school committee's plan based on the criteria contained in the Advisory Committee's Report and recommended approval to the Board of Education if said plan fulfills the requirements of this Policy.

8. The Board directs the Department of Education to prepare requests for the Fiscal Year 1980 Department of Education budget recommendations to the Governor which include staffing to provide the technical assistance needed by school districts to implement this Policy. Further, the Board will proceed to encourage public institutions of higher education to assist in the implementation of this Policy, and will seek funding from the Great and General Court for the Commonwealth In-Service Institute to enable the Institute to aid school districts in implementing this Policy.

9. The Board designates the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements to serve as the principal advisory committee on matters related to this Policy. It further directs that the Advisory Committee complete as early as possible in 1978-79 the specifications for minimum standards in mathematics and communication skills, and begin the development of optional minimum standards for consideration by school committees in areas earlier considered by the Advisory Committee such as career information, social responsibility, environment and the arts.

10. The Board has been convinced that it should not, at this time, adopt a policy which makes awarding of the high school diploma contingent

on satisfactory performance on any single test of basic skills competency. This Policy, as adopted, fulfills the intent of the Board to improve basic skills competency in partnership with local school officials. On the basis of local experience in the implementation of this Policy, however, the Board will review the need for and feasibility of including basic skills competency as one of the requirements for a diploma in the future. It directs the Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements to review this matter after implementation of local minimum standards beginning in 1980-81 and to report to the Board on this issue no later than June 1983.

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Introduction

The Advisory Committee on High School Graduation Requirements was given the task by the State Board of Education of studying the feasibility of a competency test of basic skills program for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Advisory Committee was asked to make recommendations relative to such a competency assessment program which the State Board could incorporate into a policy for the schools of Massachusetts.

After many months of studying the subject of basic skills competency testing and discussing proposals to recommend to the State Board of Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the full Advisory Committee met on May 9 and 10, 1978 to develop a body of recommendations for the State Board of Education which should be adopted as a policy on basic skills competency assessment. The Advisory Committee concentrated its efforts on recommendations submitted by the Policy Committee which were further refined by the twelve member Steering Committee.

The recommendations which follow are based upon some general conclusions reached by a majority of the Advisory Committee's members. These are stated at the outset because they establish a frame of reference for what follows.

1. The Advisory Committee feels that the State Board of Education must take a strong leadership role relative to basic skills competency assessment in the school districts of Massachusetts. The Committee is well aware of the pressures on the State Board of Education from various publics to address vigorously the alleged lack of minimal competency in basic skills on the part of a number of high school graduates. This public concern is evidenced by several bills before the Great and General Court which would mandate some form of state-wide competency testing. The Advisory Committee is also aware that this is a national concern. The State Boards of Education in over thirty states have already adopted policies to meet this real or apparent need.

2. The Advisory Committee recognizes that local communities and school districts must play a major role also in the development of a basic skill competency assessment program if it is to benefit the education of the pupils in our schools. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends a concept of

competency testing and a set of guidelines that allow local school districts to develop much of the details of a basic skills competency assessment program including selection of testing instruments and procedures to be used. This will encourage input from community agencies and citizens to local school districts and generate support for school personnel who must implement the program locally.

As a result of this basic skills competency assessment program, local school districts will benefit from an evaluation of the basic skills assessment data and be able to make positive changes in the curriculum and instruction to meet documented needs.

3. The Advisory Committee on several occasions during its deliberations opposed proposals which would recommend to the State Board of Education that it mandate passing a test or tests of basic skills competency as a requirement for high school graduation at this time. The Committee opposed the concept of the State requiring local districts to administer a State test of basic skills competency as a graduation requirement. The Advisory Committee has had the advantage of being able to review and evaluate competency test programs in other states, the reports of consultants, articles in professional journals, reports, and position papers of professional associations and organizations, and letters of educators and citizens as bases for their recommendations.

Competency testing of basic skills is a relatively recent movement and can mean a variety of things. In its broadest context, it refers to the assessment of a person's skill, proficiency, knowledge of facts, and understanding of concepts. In the current and narrow sense, competency testing is thought of as an assessment of the ability of a person to apply certain skills and concepts to answer questions or to respond to situations that one would experience in ordinary activity in his or her environment. A competency test in this context differs from the achievement tests currently used at different grade levels in most of our schools. These tests contain a preponderance of questions or items that are based upon the curriculum assumed to be taught in our schools and provide good diagnostic information for administrators and teachers.

The competency tests developed in the last few years are designed to measure a pupil's ability or competency to apply basic skills and, therefore, attempt to respond to the wave of criticism by various segments of the public, who insist that increasing numbers of high school graduates are not able to do simple tasks requiring basic skills.

The Committee feels that competency tests currently in vogue could not appropriately be given before grades 8 or 9. However, identifying pupils at an early age who have not mastered skills and concepts by an appropriate time should be a primary purpose of competency testing. Therefore, the use of curriculum-based diagnostic achievement tests rather than "competency tests" would provide a better means of earlier identification of pupils in need of additional basic skill development.

Although information gained from "competency tests" would be useful and possibly valid, the efforts of staff and resources of school districts would be much better spent in the development of a more structured and organized approach to teaching the basic skills in the curruculum. Monitoring pupil

progress in learning basic skills from the earliest years in school and in providing instructional help and support as soon as the need becomes apparent, was of paramount importance to the Committee.

Also, both Task Forces considered the competency tests now available for purchase and found that none of the commercially prepared tests fulfilled the specifications established by the Task Forces. Therefore, the Task Forces developed their own assessment instruments. The Mathematics Task Force wrote many of the test items, and the Communications Task Force revised those items presented to them. It can be said that all assessment instruments faithfully adhere to the specifications established by the Task Forces, and the successful field testing indicates that the specifications reflect what can be done in the school setting.

Some other reasons which led the Advisory Committee to the above conclusion are:

Graduation requirements in the Commonwealth, at the present time, are school requirements related to prescribed courses of study established by local school committees for their respective student populations. There is no assurance, at this time, that a State imposed competency test will deal with the content with which all of the students in a school district have been exposed to in their school experience.

A test of minimum competency as a requirement for graduation may lead to a diminution of the importance of attaining as much proficiency as a student can in relation to his or her potential.

The institution of a competency test as a requirement for high school graduation, at this time, would place the burden on the weaker academic achiever and hold him or her accountable in a 'de facto' situation.

It would be premature to impose a State competency requirement for graduation, at this time, without allowing school districts to conduct a critical analysis of their instructional requirements for goals, and a focus on the curriculum, instruction and assessment resources available in the school district.

Not requiring a competency test for graduation, at this time, would allow local school districts an opportunity to develop a formative assessment plan for monitoring student achievement of identified competencies before instituting a summary-type competency test in Grades 9 through 12 as a condition for graduation from high school.

The Advisory Committee recommends that the competency testing program in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandate assessment of basic skills achievement at the earliest grade levels feasible and at each appropriate grade level thereafter to (1) monitor individual achievement and progress, (2) provide early instructional help to pupils with diagnosed needs, (3) evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction, and (4) make appropriate changes and improvements in the total educational program.

Local school districts could if they so desire require the achievement of a certain level of competency in the basic skills as a prerequisite for graduation, but this would not be a State mandate at this time.

Each of the Advisory Committee's recommendations was voted upon individually. A record of the voting is available upon request.

A PROPOSED POLICY FOR A BASIC SKILLS COMPETENCY PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of a basic skills competency program is to assist all students in achieving mastery of basic skills prior to high school graduation through the provision of appropriate curriculum, instruction, and evaluation. The areas of communications and mathematics are identified as the areas to be developed in the first phase.

Students need basic skills in order to achieve higher order skills such as interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and judgement, as well as to acquire knowledge, and to learn by practice and experience to apply their skills and knowledge to life situations.

Recommendations

The Advisory Committee recommends that...

1. No state policy be adopted that requires the passing of a competency test or tests as a requirement for high school graduation for at least five years.

2. The State Board of Education at this time identify the basic skills areas as those recommended by the task forces of the advisory committee. The basic skills areas are as follows: Mathematics-Exhibit I; Reading-Exhibit II; Writing-Exhibit III; Listening/Speaking-Exhibit IV.

   2.1 These basic areas, as specified, may be further developed based upon input from local districts, community agencies and citizens.

3. The State Board of Education require each local school district to establish a basic skills competency program relative to the above areas.

4. The local school district will submit for approval to the State Board of Education, through a regional review process, a plan for a basic skills competency program which includes each point (4.1-4.8). The purpose of the plan will be to indicate the means by which the local school district will certify that pupils have or have not achieved specified basic skill competencies. More specifically, the local district will provide for...

   4.1 Specification of basic skills competencies and a description of methods by which they were adopted.

      i. The local school district will establish specific basic skills competencies through broad community and staff involvement which supplement those basic skills areas specified by the State.

   4.2 Description of assessment procedures and instruments used in measuring student achievement in basic skills competency areas.

i. The local school district may develop its own measurement instruments subject to state approval or may select from measurement instruments developed or approved by the state.

ii. Local school district monitoring of each student's acquisition of basic skills should begin in the primary grades.

4.3 Specification of performance criteria to be used in determining student achievement in basic skills competencies.

4.4 Description of procedures for reporting to parents, students, teachers and administrators following each student's competency assessment.

i. The local school district will publish information annually and include:

a) Where in the curriculum the competency areas are covered.

b) What diagnostic and follow up instructional services are available.

c) What local basic skills competency requirements there may be for high school graduation.

ii. The information will be distributed to all parents, students and administrators.

4.5 Report of aggregate assessment data.

i. The local school district will include a description of the procedures used to analyze, report and publish the aggregate data locally.

4.6 Assurances that appropriate follow-up instructional programs and services are provided to individual students not demonstrating achievement in basic skills competencies following each competency assessment.

i. The local school district will provide assurances of appropriate diagnostic and follow-up instructional programs relating to the basic skills competencies.

4.7 Description of a plan for monitoring, evaluating and modifying the basic skills competencies.

i. The local school district will review present school programs and curriculum for all grades in light of its established specified competencies and make appropriate modifications as necessary.

ii. The local school district will provide assurances that instructional services and programs leading to the achievement of the competencies are available to all students.

iii. The local school district will make provision for a review of curriculum and instruction following an analysis and reporting of student achievement data.

iv. The local school district will provide assurances of appropriate staff development efforts that have been planned in consultation with staff affected and that relate to implementation of the basic skills competency program.

4.8 Assurances of compliance with State Board of Education's guidelines for exemptions, waivers and appeals for students with specialized needs.

5. The State Board of Education will:

5.1 Establish a regional review process through which the local school district's basic skills competency program must be approved.

5.2 Make available to the local school district consultant and technical assistance to help in planning and implementing the basic skills competency program.

5.3 Develop policies for exemptions, waivers and appeals for students as well as for school districts affected by basic skills competency program requirements.

5.4 Launch a public information program to explain the purpose and potential of the State Board of Education's policy on competency program development.

5.5 Through the State Assessment Program, provide for a continual, longitudinal study of the impact of its competency program policy.

5.6 Provide adequate funds and staff as a precondition for implementation of this program.

Specifications For Mathematics

A. Numbers and Numeration Concepts
   1. Recognize number symbols, whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and exponents
   2. Identify odd and even numbers
   3. Count by 10's and multiply and divide by powers of 10
   4. Put numbers in numerical order
   5. Understand ratio and proportion
   6. Recognize equivalent fractions

B. Arithmetic Computations
   1. Add and subtract whole numbers
   2. Multiply a three digit whole number by a two digit whole number
   3. Divide a four digit whole number by a two digit whole number
   4. Add and subtract two mixed numbers
   5. Multiply and divide whole numbers or money by fractions
   6. Perform operations with decimal numbers
   7. Change a fraction to a decimal
   8. Find a percent of a number in situations such as simple interest, discounts, commissions, and taxes
   9. Solve simple word problems using temperature and time

C. Uses of Variables
   1. Use a variable as a place-holder in a mathematical expression
   2. Use juxtaposition as an abbreviation for multiplication
   3. Use simple formulas

D. Estimation and Approximation
   1. Round off numbers to the nearest tenth, hundreth, and thousandth
   2. Multiply by 10, 100, and 1000
   3. Approximate the answer to a computation problem
   4. Approximate discounts, money, percents, and totals
   5. Estimate length, weight/mass, capacity, time, temperature, area, and volume
   6. Estimate by making comparisons with convenient known measures
   7. Estimate by rounding up to the number of dollars needed to purchase several items

E. Measurement and Geometry
   1. Choose an appropriate measurement instrument involving both customary and metric units
   2. Read scale drawings
   3. Use a map to compute highway distances
   4. Choose an appropriate unit of measurement, metric or customary
   5. Compute the total cost, given cost per unit
   6. Convert common measurements within the same system
   7. Identify parallel, perpendicular, and intersecting lines
   8. Identify a right angle
   9. Identify a square, rectangle, triangle, and parallelogram
   10. Identify a right triangle
   11. Identify radius, diameter, and center as related to circles
   12. Identify a cube, cylinder, and sphere
   13. Find the perimeter and area of a triangle, square, rectangle, and parallelogram
   14. Find the volume of a cube or rectangular solid

F. Graphs and Tables
   1. Interpret a bar graph
   2. Interpret a circle graph
   3. Interpret a line graph
   4. Read a table
   5. Interpret a step graph

G. Prediction of Events and Statistics
   1. Determine the probability that an event will occur
   2. Determine the probability of the complement of an event
   3. Find and use the arithmetic mean and median for a group of numbers

Specifications For Reading

The committee has divided the basic reading competencies into four divisions merely for efficiency of report. In no way does this division mean to suggest a hierarchial structure. The four aspects of reading exist concurrently. It is only the task's relative sophistication which determines its position on the learning continuum.

A. Basic Word Recognition

1. Recognize and recall words.
2. Comprehend word meanings in context:
   a. recognize and recall the meaning of high frequency words accurately and quickly.
   b. recognize the components of a word:
      1) roots
      2) affixes
      3) compound words
      4) variants
      5) derivatives

B. Literal Comprehension

1. Understand the explicit meaning of written phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and longer modes of discourse.
2. Understand and follow directions.
3. Recognize the main parts of a written passage:
   a. main idea
   b. supporting details
   c. recapitulative conclusion.
4. Ability to sequence:
   a. chronological
   b. spatial
5. Identify organizational patterns of development:
   a. general -- specific
   b. concrete -- abstract
   c. comparison -- contrast
   d. important -- unimportant
6. Understand explicit meaning of charts, maps, graphs, etc.

C. Interpretive Comprehension

1. Recognize unstated relationships in a written passage:
   a. draw a conclusion through appropriate inferences.
   b. generate a principle from a series of details or specifics.
2. See and explain the implicit steps of a process:
   a. make implicit steps explicit.
   b. recognize comparable steps in similar processes.
3. Translate idiomatic expressions into its literal meaning (e.g. advertising).

D. Evaluative Comprehension

1. Make judgements about the ideas found in a passage:
   a. between accurate and inaccurate information.
   b. differentiate between essential and non-essential information.
   c. differentiate between fact and opinion.
   d. detect false or specious logic.
2. Make judgements about the methods of presentation found in a passage:
   a. recognize propaganda techniques.
   b. recognize rhetorical techniques such as those found in journalism and advertising.

Exposure and Maturation Awareness Experiences

Listed below are seven general reading experiences that students should repeatedly encounter during their secondary school education. The subcommittee believes that these experiences can be credentialized more effectively by professional observation rather than by any form of testing.

To complete the competency requirements in reading, the student will have participated in:

1. A variety of reading experiences which include reading for information and reading for pleasure.

2. A variety of reading experiences designed to develop personal values.

3. A variety of reading experiences emphasizing the universality of man and demonstrating that this quality transcends the limits of time or geography.

4. A variety of library experiences which develop the ability to know and to use library resources.

5. The study of various literary genres.

6. The oral interpretation of the written word.

7. A variety of reading activities which will develop the ability to relate what is being read to real or imagined experiences.

Although books are consumable objects, they are the traditional means by which learning and thought is tramsmitted and maintained. Consequently, their value is high. Books are not to be willfully mutilated, are not to be scorned, are not to be destroyed. A healthy rational respect of books as objects is the keynote of an "aware" reader.

Specifications For Writing

A. Substance

Does the writer have something to say?
Does the writing clearly target a specific audience?

1. Knowledge
   Does the student demonstrate knowledge of the subject?
   a. Are general statements supported with specific details?
   b. Is the writing credible?

2. Purpose
   Does the writer have a reason for saying something?
   a. Is the purpose clear?
   b. Is it consistent?
   c. Is it logical?

3. Organization
   Are the ideas sensibly arranged?
   a. Is the writing unified?
   b. Is it clear?
   c. Is it logical?
   d. Does the writing progress from one point to another?
   e. Are there appropriate connections or transitions?
   f. Is the organization of the writing appropriate?
      1) to the purpose?
      2) to the audience?

4. Diction
   Does the writer choose precise words?
   a. Do the words help the audience to see, taste, feel, hear, smell, touch?
   b. Is vocabulary appropriate?
      1) to the audience?
      2) to the purpose?

5. Completeness
   Does the writer fulfill the purpose?
   a. Is adequate information provided?
   b. Is the writing free of irrelevancy?
   c. Does the conclusion effectively reemphasize the purpose?

B. Mechanics
Does the writer follow the conventions of writing in exposition?

1. Capitalization
   Have proper nouns, proper adjectives, and beginnings of sentences been capitalized?

2. Punctuation
   Has the writer used punctuation marks appropriately?
   a. Terminal: period, question mark, explanation point?
   b. Internal: comma, apostrophe, semi-colon, quotation marks and colon?

3. Spelling
   Is the writing reasonably free of spelling error, particularly words used in conventional writing?
   a. Does the writer demonstrate mastery of common spelling rules?
   b. Does the writer demonstrate correct spelling of unusual words, given the help of a dictionary?

4. Handwriting
   Is handwriting legible?

C. Language usage

In expository writing has the writer used standard written English appropriate to the situation?

1. Agreement
   Do the subjects and verbs and pronouns and antecedents agree?

2. Verbs
    a. Are the standard forms of irregularly inflected verbs used correctly?
    b. Is the tense consistent?
3. Sentence structure
   Is the writing free from sentence fragments and/or run-on sentences?
4. Adjective/adverb confusion
   Are adjectives and adverbs used correctly?
5. Is the writing free from the use of double negatives?

Applications for Writing Skills

A. Social
   1. Informal
      a. Messages
      b. Personal letters
      c. Thank-you notes
      d. Directions

   2. Formal
      a. Invitations
      b. Acceptances
      c. Polite refusals

B. Business/Vocational
   1. Formal letters
      a. Business orders
      b. Requests for adjustments
      c. Letters of applications including personal qualifications
         1) Employment
         2) College

   2. Application forms
      a. Driving license
      b. Employment
      c. Order

   3. Reports
      a. Accident
      b. Presentation of facts
      c. Expression of opinion
      d. News events
      e. Meetings

C. Civic
   1. Letters to:
      a. The editor
      b. Public officials or political leaders

   2. Presentations to:
      a. Community groups
      b. Peer groups

   3. Statements of opinion on social and political concerns
   4. TV/radio editorial comments

D. Academic
   1. Narrative
   2. Decription
   3. Synopsis
   4. Essay
   5. Research report
   6. Dialogue
   7. Outline
   8. Response to literature

Specifications For Listening

A. Plain Sense Comprehension

   1. Identifying main ideas.

   2. Remembering significant details.

   3. Remembering simple sequences of ideas.

   4. Understanding denotative meanings of important words.

B. Interpretation

   1. Understanding implications of main ideas.

   2. Understanding implications of significant details.

   3. Understanding interrelationships among ideas and the organization pattern of spoken material weil enough to predict what will be likely to come next.

C. Evaluation, Application

   1. Judging validity and adequacy of main ideas and distinguising fact from fancy and proved statements from opinion and judgment.

   2. Judging sufficiency of supporting details in accomplishing their purpose, distinguishing relevant details from the irrelevant, and judging whether or not additional information is needed to prove the speaker's point.

   3. Criticizing organization and development of spoken material, being aware of self-contradictions by the speaker, and recognizing the devices the speaker uses to influence the listener's thinking.

   4. Judging whether the speaker has created the intended mood or effect - and if he or she has failed, why.

   5. Recognizing the intent of the speaker - what he or she wants the listener to do and ways in which ideas can properly be applied in new situations.

Specifications For Speaking

The content specifications for the speaking checklist have been abstracted from those competencies identified in the report of the Listening/Speaking Sub-Committee of the Communication Task Force. It should be noted here that the competencies identified in that report represent a hierarchy of essential listening/speaking skills, not a specific prescription for a test instrument.

Speaking Competencies

A. Relates General Information

1. Focuses on the topic
2. States facts clearly
3. Describes events
4. Explains and clarifies facts or events
5. Emphasizes the main point
6. Tells things in logical order

B. Requests General Information

1. Phrases questions clearly
2. Asks for further information, clarification, reasons, or examples
3. Asks relevant follow-up questions

C. Relates Personal Information

1. Expresses agreement or disagreement
2. Expresses pleasure or displeasure
3. Expresses personal values
4. Expresses opinions

D. Requests Personal Information

1. Asks for comments on work
2. Asks about another person's feelings or opinions

E. Modifies Speech in Response to Listeners

1. Uses appropriate content, vocabulary, and voice tone
2. Changes speech as audience changes
3. Relates statements or questions in response to audience statements

F. Uses Speech Persuasively

1. Supports statements with evidence
2. Identifies propaganda techniques
3. Knowingly states opinions
4. Brings out different points of view
5. Raises the next point
6. Proposes a resolution, plan of action, or conclusion

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Bibliography

Airasian, Peter and Madaus, George. "Issues in Evaluating Student Outcomes in Competency-Based Graduation Programs." Journal of Research and Development in Education, Vol. 10, Spring 1977 pp.79-81.

This article addresses the broader issues associated with the implementation and evaluation of competency-based graduation programs. Specific topics include problems associated with the identification of competencies, the effect of competency-based programs on the aims and emphases of secondary education, and the effects on the curriculum.

Anderson, Earl N. Coping With Oregon's New Competency-Based Education Requirements - The View From A Practitioner. Available from: Metropolitan Administrative Service Center, P.O. Box 16657, Portland, Oregon 97216. 1975.

Problems encountered by Oregon school districts in implementing the state's mandated K-12 state-wide competency program are discussed in this article. Major difficulties encountered were: 1) initial guidelines were not available, 2) financial allocations were insufficient, and 3) the time span allowed for development and implementation of the program was too short. Many districts in Oregon successfully adopted a consortium approach to deal with these difficulties. School districts pooled talents to develop materials for implementing Oregon's program requirements.

Bossone, Richard M, and Trayka, Lynn Quitman. Proceedings: The National Conference on Minimum Competencies: Trends and Issues. Center for Advanced Study in Education, the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. March 4, 1977.

This conference provided a forum for exchanging ideas and information about developing guidelines for measuring minimal competencies. Topics included competency legislation, major problems and issues, and testing strategies for measuring competency. Papers delivered included "An Overview Regarding Minimal Competencies" by Chris Pipho, "Minimum Competencies: Problems and Opportunities" by Gordon M. Ambach, "Item Characteristics and Criteria" by Donald Ross Green, and "The Need for Test Security", by Anthony Polemeni. The editors compiled and included a set of questions and answers related to competency-based education.

California State Department of Education and the San Mateo Educational Resource Center. Resource Catalog for Proficiency Assessment. California State Department of Education. 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814. August 1977.

This resource book was developed to assist local California school districts in implementing Assembly Bill 3408 (Hart Bill), which requires that local school districts establish high school graduation requirements and proficiency standards for basic skills. The resource book was developed in

conjunction with the San Mateo Educational Resource Center (SMERC), a comprehensive information center in California. A computerized search of the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) and SMERC files on this topic yielded 118 entries. Annotated articles cover a range of issues: the philosophy of competency-based education; program implementation; competencies in mathematics, language arts, and other subjects; and testing information.

Educational Leadership. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1701 K Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20006. Vol. 35, November 1977.

This issue is devoted to "Competencies as the Aim of Education", and includes articles on competency programs in Maryland, Oregon, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

"Educators are Divided on Return to Basics, Competency-based Education, Survey Shows." School Administrator, Vol. 34, October 1977, pp. 1-8.

There is very little consensus about the competency movement among school administrators. This short article reviews the results of the American Association of School Administrators' (AASA's) survey of its membership on this subject, and summarizes the positions for and against competency-based education, as well as administrators who are waiting for further developments in this area. The article lists questions voiced by many administrators about the competency movement. It makes reference to the AASA's Critical Issues Report on the Competency Movement: Problems and Solutions. (See Shirley Boes Neill below.)

Houston, W. Robert, and Warner, Allen R. "The Competency-Based Movement: Origins and Future." Educational Technology, Vol. 17, June 1977.

The implications of competency-based education in teacher training programs are examined in this article. "Performance-based" terminologies are defined and distinguished. The authors review the popularity of competency-based teacher education programs at the state, federal, and international levels. Criticisms of competency-based education in the teaching profession are also included ranging from the misuse of competency-based education programs to the basic impracticality of the approach. The article also provides a lengthy list of references focusing on competency-based teacher education.

Issues: Back to Basics. Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155. Fall 1976.

Back to Basics is a compilation of twelve short articles written by Massachusetts educators. Articles include: a discussion of what is meant by "the basics", criticism of the Back to Basics movement, and a listing of what certain districts have identified as basic or essential skills.

McClung, Mark Steven. "Are Competency Testing Programs Fair? Legal?" Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 59, February 1978, pp. 397-400.

This article addresses issues of discrimination that may arise from the adoption of competency testing, such as: 1) the curricular and instructional validity of the test, 2) the possibility of linguistic or cultural bias, 3) the need for inclusion of an adequate phase-in period, 4) the adequate provision of remedial instruction, 5) the possibility of the programs becoming tracking mechanisms, and 6) the issue of student accountability for unsatisfactory performance.

Miller, Barbara Soloth. Minimum Competency Testing: A Report of Four Regional Conferences. St. Louis: Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory. January 1978.

This report summarizes the issues raised by speakers and participants at four regional conferences on minimal competency testing held in 1977, sponsored by the Education Commission of the States, in conjunction with the National Institute of Education and the Carnegie Corporation. Viewpoints of parents, students, teachers, and legislators, among others, are included as part of an in-depth consideration of various issues such as accountability, and guidelines for developing and implementing competency programs. Annotations of major papers prepared by major policy analysts in the field are included. An appendix includes Chris Pipho's "State Activity in Minimal Competency Testing" chart, and Henry Brickell's "Seven Key Notes On Minimal Competency Testing."

Neill, Shirley Boes. Critical Issues Report: The Competency Movement: Problems and Solutions. Sacramento, California: Education News Service for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). 1978. (available for $8.95 each from AASA, 1801 N. Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209).

One of a series of Critical Issues Reports published by the American Association of School Administrators, this report focuses on issues surrounding the competency movement. Topics include: the origins, problems, and prospects of the competency movement; administrators' perspectives on the competency movement; a survey of school districts such as Denver, Syracuse, and Los Angeles that have adopted competency programs, and information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Pipho, Chris. State Activity: Minimal Competency Testing. Education Commission of the States, 300 Lincoln Tower, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado, 80295. March 15, 1978.

This is an easily readable chart that lists the activities of states working on competency projects. The grid covers such areas as the setting of standards, grade levels assessed, skill areas assessed, the use of standards and tests, and formal actions taken by states on this issue.

Pipho, Chris. Update VII: Minimal Competency Testing. Denver: Education Commission of the States. ($6.50/copy, pre-paid).

This report includes federal and state legislation, State Board of Education rulings, State Department of Education activity, and local district programs for minimal competency testing. Contact persons and addresses are included.

Reilly, Wayne. Competency Based Education: Some Educational, Political and Historical Perspectives. Available from: Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C., September 1977.

Competency-based education is becoming the educational movement of the 70's. Therefore, it is necessary to understand its origins, educational basis, and its political ramifications, in order to intelligently develop and implement programs. This paper draws upon concrete examples in discussing a definition of competency-based education; the historical roots of this movement; contrasting approaches to competency-based education in Gary, Indiana and St. Paul, Minnesota; and a survey of criticisms of competency-based education.

Resources for Performance-Based Education: State Minimal Requirements for High School Graduation. The Resource and Referral Service of the Center for Vocational Education, Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio, 43210.

This brochure, one of a series of mini-lists developed by the Resource and Referral Service is an annotated bibliography including seven major organizations studying and compiling information about the minimal competency movement. Pending federal legislation filed by Congressman Mottl (Ohio) to establish national educational proficiency standards is also described.

Spady, William G. "Competency-Based Education: A Bandwagon in Search of Definition." Educational Researcher, January 1977, pp. 9-14.

The author warns of the pitfalls of bandwagon movements, and devotes most of his article to six critical elements associated with the competency-based education movement: outcomes, time, instruction, measurement, certification, and program adaptability. Spady asserts that schools must carefully consider and define these issues before competency programs are adopted.

Tractenberg, Paul L. The Legal Implications of Statewide Pupil Performance, Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory for the Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. September/October 1977.

In order to explore the legal implications of statewide pupil performance standards, the author reviews their historical background, then examines various constitutional, statutory, and common law theories supporting challenges to standards adopted, or likely to be adopted, by states. Arguments are discussed which state that the establishment of statewide per pupil performance standards is legally required. The paper concludes with suggestions about the future legal course of these standards.

Walker, Decker F. "The Hard Lot of the Professional in a Refo m Movement." Educational Leadership, Vol. 35, November 1977, pp. 83-85.

The subject of this editorial is the politics of educational change and reform. The author examines how lay people and professional educators approach educational change. His thesis is that the process for making public policy in education is dramatic, yet convenient, and that it is the responsibility of professional educators to make it more effective and constructive. The author suggests that the competency-based education movement should be the forum in which to promote change in educational policy-making. The remainder of this issue of Educational Leadership focuses on competency-based education.

Weber, George. "New Competency Requirements for the High School Diploma." Council for Basic Education Bulletin. Vol. 22, January 1978, pp. 1-7.

This article summarizes the alleged causes of functional illiteracy in high school graduates and suggests that the practice of "social promotion" is a major cause. Weber describes the comprehensive approach to a competency-based "proficiency diploma", exemplified by Oregon's competency objectives. The limited approach is typified by states such as Arizona, and local districts such as Denver. The author describes all the states and some local districts that adopted minimum competency requirements prior to June 1977.

Testing Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography on Applied Performance Testing. Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 710 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204, February 1978.

This annotated bibliography is a compendium of tests and materials related to applied performance testing. Materials listed can be obtained from the Clearinghouse.

Bhaerman, Robert D. "What Do Teachers Think About Tests and Testing?" American Educator, Vol. 1, Winter 1977, pp. 10-14.

A discussion generated at the April 1976 meeting of the American Federation of Teachers Task Force on Educational Issues resulted in the development of a questionnaire about standardized tests. Questions ranged from the use of standardized tests and the curriculum, to suggestions for improvement of tests. Responses from elementary and secondary school teachers suggested aspects of tests that should be utilized or discarded. The article concludes with twelve recommendations by the American Federation of Teachers task force.

Brady, Elizabeth. "To Test or Not To Test." American Educator Vol. 1, Winter 1977, pp. 3-9.

Brady examines the pervasive use of standardized tests within the American education system, and the impact of test results upon educational decision-making. The article is intended to assist teachers to better understand,

criticize, select, and score standardized tests, and to examine effects of testing upon the curriculum. The author also proposes alternative means of assessing students.

Brickell, Henry M. "Seven Key Notes on Minimal Competency Testing." Presented at four regional conferences sponsored by the Education Commission of the States and The National Institute of Education. Fall 1977.

This paper is intended as a guide for anyone planning to develop tests for a minimal competency program. The article discusses seven basic questions: which competencies should be required?, how and when should they be measured?, how many minimums should be set?, how high should the minimums be set?, should these minimums be for the student or the schools?, and what should be done about students who do not pass the competency tests? A useful policy alternatives checklist for minimal competency testing is included.

Brickell, Henry M. Let's Talk About...Minimum Competency Testing, Education Commission of the States. (see address above).

This guide reprints the "Seven Key Notes on Minimal Competency Testing" by Henry M. Brickell, noted above. It also includes a discussion guide and a mailable questionnaire to record public and professional thinking on the issue of minimum competency testing.

Buros, Oscar K. "Fifty Years on Testing: Some Reminiscences, Criticisms, and Suggestions." Educational Researcher, Vol. 6, July/August 1977, pp. 9-15.

The author presents a concise history of the testing movement since its beginning. He asserts that little progress has been made since 1927, and criticizes standardized tests for their poor construction, their questionable validity, and their frequent misuse. He states that if the goal of testing were to measure rather than differentiate, then methods of construction, assessment, and interpretation of tests would be drastically changed. Buros suggests that locally adapted tests with local norms should be substituted for national tests and norms, thereby increasing local input and validity.

Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing (CAPT) Newsletter. November 1977. Available from Dr. Dean H. Nafziger, c/o CAPT. (see address above).

This bi-monthly newsletter examines the legal, organizational, and measurement issues raised in the current trend toward competency testing. This issue includes information about Hawaii's development of student competencies. The Clearinghouse is also formulating an annotated bibliography on minimum competency testing as well as information on new products and tests developed in the minimum competency field.

Education Testing, Measurement and Evaluation. Available from the Education Research Library, National Institute of Education, 1832 M Street N.W. Washington, D.C.

This represents an extensive bibliography of books in this field.

Egerton, Harriet A., Harlan, Hugh A. N-ABELS - A Manageable Technique for Monitoring the Acquisition of Essential Learning Skills. Lincoln, Nebraska. 1976.

In the summer of 1975 the Nebraska Assessment Battery of Essential Learning Skills (N-ABELS) was published. It is a goal-oriented teaching instrument that includes a method of assessing a student's mastery of twelve defined skills. These skills are in communication, mathematics, and research or "inquiry." A summary of the process of selecting information to be tested is provided as well as the defined purposes and goals of each test. Four aims of this assessment program are outlined: 1) to assure the public that its priorities and goals are taken seriously by the schools, 2) to encourage public acceptance of new programs by assuring mastery of essential skills, 3) to deal with the issue of accountability, and 4) to emphasize the teacher's continuing obligation to student competency in essential skills.

Parks, Paul. "Minimal Competency Testing." Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Educational Affairs. March 1978.

This paper discusses the inadequacies of minimal competency testing as an attempt to solve the problems schools are now facing. A brief description of several states' minimal competency program policies is included in addition to a section on Massachusetts. Discussion follows about why minimal competency testing is an insufficient response and recommendations are made for the direction Massachusetts policy makers should pursue in the future.

"Minimum Competency Testing: Can The States Legislate Literacy?", The Phi Delta Kappan. Available from Director of Administrative Services, Eighth and Union, Bloomington, Indiana, 47401. Vol. 59, No. 9, May 1978.

This issue includes articles by a number of experts discussing the pros and cons of minimum competency testing.

"A Principal Debate: Do We Really Need A National Competency Test?". The National Elementary Principal, Vol. 57, January 1978, pp. 47-70.

This article includes testimony presented to the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities of the Committee on Human Resources on July 14, 1977 by Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. His argument for national standardized tests and national academic standards is the focus of the debate in this article. Responses to his argument are included from a principal; a superintendent; a professor of education; and representatives from teacher associations, citizen groups, and parent-teacher associations.

References Related to Applied Performance Testing and References Related to Minimum Competency Testing. Clearinghouse for Applied Performance Testing. (see address above).

This publication provides a list of documents, journals, and reports on these two subjects.

Resources for Assessing Student Competencies. The Resource and Referral Service of the Center for Vocational Education. November 30, 1977. (see address above).

This is an annotated bibliography of organizations which provide information on assessment, analysis of assessment products, and various tests. Contact people and addresses are also provided.

"Those Minimal Competency Tests - Will They Be the Raft or the Ruin of the Public Schools?" The American School Board Journal, January 1978, pp. 28-29.

The author of this editorial calls the minimal competency test movement the "bouncing offspring" of the competency-based education movement. Several issues related to minimal competency testing are reviewed including questions about reliability of test results, legality of tests and accountability. Action in Oregon, Arizona, Kentucky, Michigan, and North Carolina is summarized. The views of H.E.W. Secretary Joseph Califano on this issue are included. The article concludes with seven basic questions that should be included in any discussion of minimal competency education.

Wildemuth, Barbara M. Minimal Competency Testing: Issues and Procedures: An Annotated Bibliography. Educational Resources Information Center. July 1977.

This annotated bibliography includes selected articles and papers that were located by computer searches of various data banks such as Educational Resources Information Center, National Technical Information Service, Dissertation Abstracts, Exceptional Child Education Abstracts, and Psychological Abstracts. Papers cover such topics as minimal competency testing; the California High School Proficiency Exam; the Oregon graduation requirements; the Criterion-Referenced Basic Skills Assessment Program in Phoenix, Arizona; and an update on state legislation for competency-based education.

SELECTED COMPETENCY TESTS AND SERVICES

This section describes several tests which are currently available for assessing junior and senior high school students' competency in basic skills. Cost estimates are included where available. However, it is important to regard costs as approximate, since exact costs vary according to scoring services desired and the number of packages purchased.

The Adult Performance Level Survey (APL)

Contact: Director, APL Program
American College Testing Program
P.O. Box 168
Iowa City, Iowa 52240
(319) 356-3943

Cost: $1.96 per student

The APL Survey is available in high school or adult forms. The vocabulary and sentence structure of the survey are at the fifth grade level. The survey measures skills such as identification of facts and terms, reading, writing, computation and problem solving; across content areas such as community resources, occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health, government and law. Individual and summary reports are available. In addition to the APL Survey, customized services* are available from the American College Testing Program in the areas mentioned above.

Basic Skills Assessment

Contact: George Elford
Educational Testing Service (ETS)
Wellesley Hills, MA 02181
(617) 235-8860

Cost: $1.85 per student

The Basic Skills Assessment consists of reading, writing,and mathematics tests which were developed for administration to high school students to identify students with learning problems or determine high school graduation eligibility The tests are normed at the 8th, 9th, and 12th grade levels, and deal with "real life materials". Workshops and training programs are available through ETS regional offices. Optional essay scoring is available as are additional tests in other areas such as social studies.

CTB/McGraw Hill Competency Testing Programs

Contact: Richard Denechaud
12 Cedar Hill Road
East Longmeadow, MA 01028
(413) 525-3037

Cost: see individual test description

CTB/McGraw Hill publishes a range of competency tests which measure minimum competencies in reading, writing, and computation skills necessary for everyday life. Scoring services include an objectives mastery report by class, a frequency distribution by school and district, a list of students not passing

by school and district, and an individual student record label. Follow up instructional materials are available for each test. Customized services* (ORBIT--Objective Referenced Bank of Items and Tests) are available in the areas of reading, communications, and mathematics skills. Currently available tests include:

SHARP: Senior High Assessment of Reading Performance
assesses reading skills at the high school level
cost: $1.45 per student

PAIR: Performance Assessment in Reading
assesses reading skills at the junior high level
cost: not available

TOPICS: Test of Performance in Computational Skills
assesses computation skills at the high school level
cost: $.64 per student

ASC: Assessment of Skills in Computation
assesses computation skills at the junior high level
cost: not available

TEWS: Test of Everyday Writing Skills
assesses writing skills at the high school level
cost: not available

EDST: Everyday Skills Test in Reading and Mathematics
assesses reading and mathematics skills at the junior high level
cost: reading - $.91 per student
mathematics - $.95 per student

SRA Survival Skills Tests

Contact: Phil Cousins
Science Research Associates, Inc.
Wacker Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
(312) 984-2000

Cost: $1.42 per student

The SRA Survival Skills Tests assess basic skills in either mathematics or reading. Each test contains 20 objectives, each measured by three test items. Two editions are now available - a school edition for grades 6-12 and an adult edition for grades 11,12, and adult. Scoring services include an individual student profile, a list report, and a group summary report. Customized services* are available in reading (entitled SOBAR-System for Objective Based Assessment of Reading) and in mathematics, grades K-9.

Test of Consumer Competencies (TCC)

Contact: Richard Gregg
Scholastic Testing Service, Inc.
480 Meyer Road
Bensenville, Illinois 60106
(312) 766-7150

Cost: $.74 per student

The TCC has two equivalent forms for pre and post-testing in fourteen basic consumer skills including the individual consumer in the market place, money management, consumer credit, housing, food, transportation, clothing, health services, drugs and cosmetics, recreation, furnishings and appliances, insurance, savings and investments, taxes, and the consumer in society. The test is normed at grades 8-12 and is hand scoreable.

* Customized test building services are offered by several testing companies which maintain banks of objectives and test items. Tests are designed according to local district specifications. Individualized test preparation services are also available from:

Company	Name of Service	Areas
Houghton Mifflin 1 Beacon Road Boston, MA 02107 (617) 725-5000	SCORE criterion/ referenced testing service	reading mathematics language arts
Education Commission of the States 1860 Lincoln Street Suite 700 Denver, Colorado 80203 (303) 893-5200	NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress)	reading mathematics

MASSACHUSETTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- Fred Andelman
  Massachusetts Teachers Association
- Daniel M. Barraford, III
  Hersey Products, Dedham
- Mildred Berkowitz
  English Teacher, Dartmouth Public Schools
- Fred Blanchard
  Junior High School Principal, Randolph Public Schools
- Robert Bray
  Secondary School Principal, Attleboro Public Schools
- Robert Coelho
  Superintendent of Schools, Attleboro Public Schools
- George Curtin
  School Committee, Westfield Public Schools
- John Deady
  Superintendent of Schools, Springfield Public Schools
- William Fasciano
  Secondary School Principal, Somerville Public Schools
- Alwyn Griffith
  Junior High School Principal, New Bedford Public Schools
- Edward Hall
  New England Life Company
- Bertram Holland
  Massachusetts Association of Secondary School Principals
- Narcissa Jones
  Bilingual Educator, Boston Public Schools
- Jid Kamitian
  Secondary School Principal, Holliston Public Schools
- Ann Keenan
  English Department Head, Braintree Public Schools
- John Kent
  Elementary School Principal, Holbrook Public Schools
- Gail Latouf
  Student, Boston Public Schools

- Stephen Levine
  Special Needs Coordinator, Bridgewater Public Schools

- Benjamin Levy
  Mathematics Teacher, Lexington Public Schools

- John Monbouquette
  Superintendent of Schools, Braintree Public Schools

- Helen Moran
  Boston Public Schools

- William Reid, (Alternate)
  Boston Public Schools

- Melissa Paly
  Student, Marblehead Public Schools

- Edward Reidy
  Project Competency, Fitchburg Public Schools

- Virginia Ross
  English Department Head, Marshfield Public Schools

- Charlotte Ryan
  Massachusetts Parent-Teacher-Student Association

- Charles Smith
  Parent, Pittsfield

- Thomas Tanous
  Guidance Counselor, Beverly Public Schools

- Eugene Thayer
  Special Education Planning Project, Boston

- Greg Thomas
  Teacher, Boston Public Schools

- David Tobin, Superintendent of Schools
  Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School District

- Miriam Torres
  Parent, Worcester

- Yolanda Ulloa
  Bilingual Education Director, Springfield Public Schools

- Harry Walen
  Guidance Counselor, Needham Public Schools

- Philip Wormwood
  Secondary School Principal, Andover Public Schools

- Virginia Yardumian
  School Committee, Malden Public Schools

Mathematics Competency Task Force

- Benjamin N. Levy, Chairperson
  Lexington Public Schools
- Thomas Armstrong
  Foxborough Public Schools
- Julia Bale
  Springfield Public Schools
- Bette A. Bridges
  Norwood Public Schools
- Beatrice A. Butler
  Springfield Public Schools
- Joseph Caruso
  Somerville Public Schools
- Lenore Fenn
  Parent, Lexington
- Edward C. Hall
  New England Mutual Life Insurance Company
- Phillip P. Halloran
  Springfield Public Schools
- John Tite
  Grafton Public Schools
- Catherine Tobin
  Lexington Public Schools

Communication Competency Task Force

- Ann Keenan
  Braintree Public Schools, Chairperson
- John Bray
  Monument Mountain Regional High School
- Norman Colb
  Brookline Public Schools
- James Collins
  Springfield Technical High School
- Barbara Krysiak
  Waltham Public Schools

- Eileen Malloy
  Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

- Norman Najimy
  Pittsfield Public Schools

- David Nims
  Oakmont Regional High School

- Virginia Ross
  Marshfield High School

COMPETENCY/ASSESSMENT LINKERS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUACTION

Peter Coffin
Northeast Regional Center
1551 Osgood Street
North Andover, MA 01845 (617) 687-3351

Athena Costopoulos
Greater Boston Regional Center
54 Rindge Avenue Extension
Cambridge, MA 02140 (617) 547-7472

Paul Francis
Southeast Regional Center
P.O. Box 29
Middleboro, MA 02346 (617) 947-3240

Winnifred Green
Pittsfield Regional Center
188 South Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 499-0745

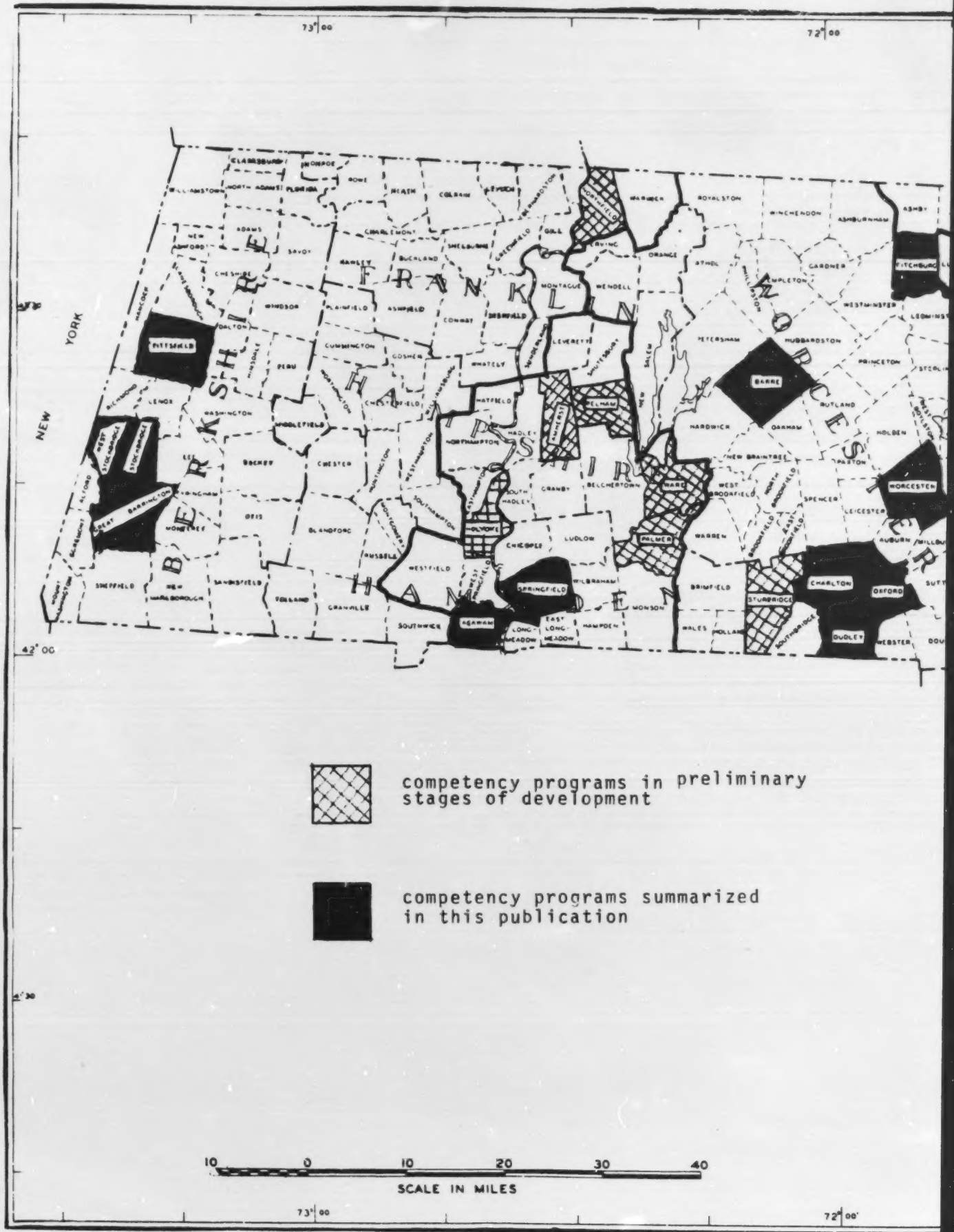
Anne Schumer
Springfield Regional Center
155 Maple Street
Springfield, MA 01105 (413) 739-7271

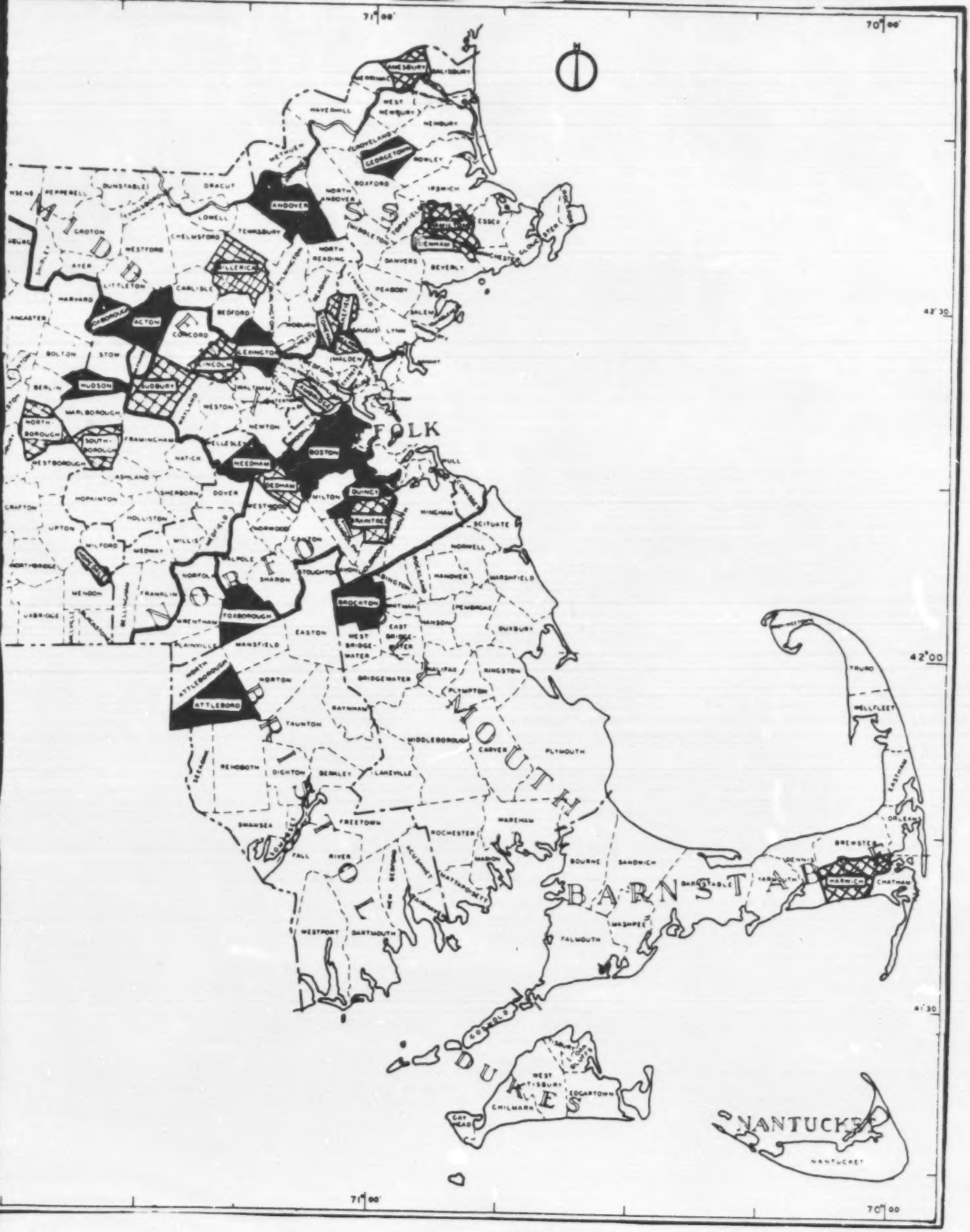
Adrienne Margulis
Central Massachusetts Regional
Center
Beaman Street Route 140
West Boylston, MA 01583 (617) 835-6267

The following Department staff people are also available to provide assistance with and answer questions about essential competency standards for students with special needs or bilingual and ethnically different students:

Bambi Levine/Kevin Matthews
Massachusetts Department of Education
Division of Special Education
31 St. James Avenue Room 650
Boston, MA 02116 (617) 727-5770

Eugene S. Long
Massachusetts Department of Education
Bureau of Transitional Bilingual
Education
31 St. James Avenue Room 540
Boston, MA 02116 (617) 727-8300


73° 00
72° 00
42° 00
NEW YORK
BERKSHIRE
FRANKLIN
HAMPSHIRE
HAMPDEN
WORCESTER
competency programs in preliminary stages of development
competency programs summarized in this publication
10 0 10 20 30 40
SCALE IN MILES


71°00'
70°00'
42°30
42°00
41°30
MIDDLESEX
ESSEX
NORFOLK
SUFFOLK
PLYMOUTH
BRISTOL
BARNSTABLE
DUKES
NANTUCKET
ANDOVER
LOWELL
LAWRENCE
GEORGETOWN
NEWBURYPORT
SALISBURY
HAVERHILL
NEWBURY
ROWLEY
IPSWICH
GLOUCESTER
ESSEX
MANCHESTER
CHELMSFORD
TEWKSBURY
NORTH READING
DANVERS
BEVERLY
PEABODY
SALEM
LYNN
MALDEN
MELROSE
WOBURN
BILLERICA
CARLISLE
BEDFORD
CONCORD
ACTON
MAYNARD
STOW
BOLTON
LINCOLN
LEXINGTON
HUDSON
SUDBURY
WALTHAM
WESTON
NEWTON
BROOKLINE
BOSTON
NEEDHAM
DEDHAM
MILTON
QUINCY
BRAINTREE
WEYMOUTH
HINGHAM
SCITUATE
NORWELL
HANOVER
MARSHFIELD
PEMBROKE
DUXBURY
KINGSTON
PLYMPTON
HALIFAX
BRIDGEWATER
MIDDLEBOROUGH
CARVER
PLYMOUTH
WAREHAM
MARION
MATTAPOISETT
ROCHESTER
FREETOWN
FALL RIVER
SWANSEA
REHOBOTH
DIGHTON
BERKLEY
TAUNTON
RAYNHAM
EASTON
WEST BRIDGEWATER
BROCKTON
FOXBOROUGH
MANSFIELD
NORTON
ATTLEBORO
NORTH ATTLEBOROUGH
PLAINVILLE
WRENTHAM
FRANKLIN
MEDWAY
MILFORD
HOPKINTON
ASHLAND
SHERBORN
DOVER
NATICK
WELLESLEY
WEST NEWTON
NORWOOD
CANTON
STOUGHTON
SHARON
WALPOLE
NORFOLK
MEDFIELD
WESTBOROUGH
SOUTHBOROUGH
NORTHBOROUGH
MARLBOROUGH
BERLIN
HARVARD
AYER
GROTON
PEPPERELL
DUNSTABLE
DRACUT
WESTFORD
WESTPORT
DARTMOUTH
WESTPORT
SWANSEA
FALL RIVER
SOMERSET
BERKLEY
DIGHTON
REHOBOTH
LAKEVILLE
MATTAPOISETT
MARION
ROCHESTER
WAREHAM
BOURNE
SANDWICH
FALMOUTH
MASHPEE
BARNSTABLE
YARMOUTH
DENNIS
BREWSTER
HARWICH
CHATHAM
ORLEANS
EASTHAM
WELLFLEET
TRURO
PROVINCETOWN
CONCORD
EDGARTOWN
WEST TISBURY
CHILMARK
GAY HEAD
NANTUCKET